THE PUBLIC EYE DECEMBER 18, 2016 4:00 AM

'Spiritual warfare,' 'demonic attacks.' The role religion played in home for sex-trafficking victims





BY MARJIE LUNDSTROM AND SAM STANTON mlundstrom@sacbee.com

Two weeks before the voluntary shutdown this year of Courage House, a licensed group home for young sex-trafficking victims near Sacramento, a ritual was performed on a teenage girl.

According to findings in a state investigation, the girl's forehead was anointed with oil, a religious verse was recited and the teen was told she would have to be a Christian, or at least denounce Satan, to continue living in the home. Crosses then were handed out to the other girls to wear.

Courage House founder Jenny Williamson later would explain that the girl had multiple personalities and posed a danger to herself and others. "She worshipped Satan, and she practiced animal and human sacrifice," she told The Sacramento Bee in August.

Williamson told regulators in a June 18 memo responding to the state's unannounced visit that the girl had been the victim of satanic ritualistic abuse and told staff she had "participated in human sacrifice when she was an alter personality." Williamson said the girl terrified staff by announcing that "this week was a blood sacrifice week."

The California Department of Social Services did not accept the group home's explanation and issued Courage House a "Type A" citation, the most severe penalty for violations considered serious enough to have an immediate impact on clients' health, safety or personal rights.

In its investigation, the state found that the girl had an interest in satanism but did not threaten to perform sacrifices and, instead, had "made a general statement that she enjoyed drawing some of the images" of satanic practice, a state licensing official wrote.

Courage House appealed the citation twice, losing again in November, arguing in its appeals documents that the state's investigation was "grossly inadequate" and that "the resident was adamant that she wanted to pray to become a Christian." In addition, her condition left her with frequent amnesia, preventing her from being able to recount "full events," two Courage House officials wrote Oct. 6 in their second appeal to the state.

"There was never any pressure given, or ultimatums discussed with her," wrote former program director Melissa Herrmann and clinical director Angela Chanter, who participated in the episode. "She was told she could not perform human and animal sacrifices, or drink the blood of any person there, but she was never told she could not worship Satan nor was she told she had to become a Christian."

The clash underscores the tension that can arise between faith-based service providers and government officials – each held accountable for the health and safety of vulnerable clients.

Over the last decade, child sex trafficking has become a hot-button topic, spawning new programs and multiple new funding streams. Christian organizations in particular have rallied to the cause, organizing conferences, engaging communities and embarking on worldwide missionary work.

Some Christian-based groups, such as Courage House and its nonprofit parent organization, Courage Worldwide Inc. of Rocklin, have gone a step further, establishing their own facilities to house and treat young victims.

As the new year approaches, the once-vaunted program is struggling to reopen its Northern California facility for six girls, ages 11 to 17, while undergoing scrutiny from the state – including accusations it has violated children's right to religious freedom.

Because Courage Worldwide accepts government money – \$9,100 a month per child at the time the group's Sacramento-area home closed in June – the program must stay within regulatory boundaries and not favor one religion over another, or press children to participate. If it is able to reopen, it would be eligible for about \$12,000 a month per girl under a new state system in effect next year.

Courage Worldwide officials maintain they have found the appropriate balance.

"State funds do not mean you cannot be a Christian home – state funds and license mean you cannot force a child to practice any religious ritual, and Courage House does not," said Gil Stieglitz, a board member for Courage Worldwide Inc. and pastor at Bayside Church in Roseville, in an emailed response.

From the time Courage Worldwide opened its Sacramento-area group home in 2011 on 52 acres north of the city, the organization has been steeped in Christian beliefs and practices, according to a Bee examination of state licensing records, dozens of internal Courage Worldwide emails and interviews with 17 former employees, business associates and a former client. The group opened a second Courage House around that same time in the east African country of Tanzania that it says now has 12 beds.

Over and over, Williamson has publicly recited the story of how God spoke to her in church and directed her to build a home for her "daughters." The organization's major benefactors – and recruiting grounds for volunteers and donations – have included Christian churches in the Sacramento region and other states.

Email exchanges in 2012 among corporate executives, obtained from a source, show spirited and sometimes frenetic discussions about "demonic attacks" on the girls and the "spiritual warfare" necessary to counter the threat.

"October is a hideous month where the evil one is worshipped daily by his followers and those on our team (and some of our girls in Africa and Nor Cal) that have come out of SRA or witchcraft (satanic ritual abuse) are experience (sic) relentless demonic attacks," employee Stephanie Midthun wrote in an October 2012 email to staff.

Midthun and her husband, Joel, are key figures in the Courage Worldwide organization. Joel, the pastor of Elk Grove's Living Water Church, is on the board of directors. Stephanie has served in various roles since 2008, including creative director, chaplain, spiritual adviser and community relations director.

A July 2011 email Williamson sent to her staff and supporters warned: "We are at war! We are under great attack and need your prayers ... If you have a personal relationship with the girls – any time this week – morning, noon, afternoon evening please go out to Courage House to pray and prophecy over them, please, please do so!"

In a March 2012 email, Herrmann, the former program director, discussed the possibility of taking a young client being discharged from a hospital directly to a hotel room in Elk Grove "while she goes through a more intense deliverance and prayer process before transitioning her back" to Courage House.

For years, Williamson has touted an ambitious expansion plan for Courage House Northern California that includes as its centerpiece a shimmering chapel with a large cross, according to architectural renderings. The architect's plan, which also envisions 10 new cottages for 60 girls, describes the chapel "as the most important building on the campus." Despite aggressive fundraising around those plans – and a \$300,000-plus kick start in 2011 from Bayside Church – the organization has yet to break ground.

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SHE WAS TOLD SHE COULD NOT PERFORM HUMAN AND ANIMAL SACRIFICES, OR DRINK THE BLOOD OF ANY PERSON THERE, BUT SHE WAS NEVER TOLD SHE COULD NOT WORSHIP SATAN NOR WAS SHE TOLD SHE HAD TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

Courage House officials, in response to state citation

Williamson and other Courage Worldwide officials vehemently deny there is any pressure to practice Christianity at Courage House, and said that girls are free to attend services of their choice as staffing levels permit.

"We are in full agreement with the state to provide access to religious services when the girls request it, if provided sufficient notice in advance so that we can properly staff for such requests," Courage Worldwide officials said in an emailed statement to The Bee.

The state licensing file includes a sample of a "Courage House religious participation form," which allows girls to check a box indicating their preferences. Choices range from no participation to weekly church services to worship nights and other spiritual events.

The role of religion

Internal emails obtained by The Bee illustrate how staff operations at Courage House at times were intertwined with religious pursuits.

Date: October, 24, 2012

Subject: Re: #Be Courageous in prayer/week #2/Battle worship service

The girls at Courage House are still experiencing a lot of demonic attacks. During this trip we have found out quite a bit about some significant amount of witchcraft that was done on the property previously over a number of years (prior to Courage House). We have also been spending time praying with the girls and brought in some local experts in the area of witchcraft to help pray with them individually. Please continue to pray for breakthrough and complete protection over our girls and staff.

From: Jenny Williamson Sent: Sunday, July 10, 2011

Subject: Prayer Covering, Monday July 11th -- Confidential Battle Strategy

If you have a personal relationship with the girls -- any time this week -- morning, noon, afternoon evening please go out to Courage House to pray and prophecy over them, please, please do so!

Even so, the state leveled a Type B citation against Courage House in December 2015, finding that the girls were required to attend the Midthuns' church – a concern shared by some staff members.

DeAnne Brining, a former therapist at the home, said the girls felt awkward and conspicuous at the church because the congregation knew who they were. "The girls did not want to be known as Courage girls," she said. "Everybody at that church knew they were trafficked."

Courage Worldwide officials disputed the state's findings, telling The Bee the Elk Grove church was the girls' "consensus choice."

The citation was the first of two issued to Courage House by the department's Community Care Licensing Division for violating children's religious freedom. That in itself is unusual: Citations regarding religious freedom are so rare in California group homes that only nine other group homes out of 1,500 statewide – regardless of size – have been written up for this violation in the last five years, according to an analysis of statewide data, which includes facilities that operated during this period but are now closed.

Courage Worldwide's conflicts with the state have extended beyond matters of religious freedom. In the last five years, Courage House has been cited 36 times for regulatory violations, according to the data released to The Bee in early December. That's more than three times the average for citations at the 300 facilities statewide of similar size and classification level.

Only 14 facilities in California of similar size and classification logged more citations during that period.

Courage Worldwide officials, in their emailed response, noted that while some deficiencies have been about policy, others involved "paperwork issues."

"No deficiency has been over an issue that the state viewed as serious enough to shut our facility, as it has at other facilities," the email stated.

'Battle worship' and witchcraft

A former life coach and motivational speaker, Williamson founded her nonprofit a decade ago, originally under the name Courage To Be You Inc. The organization started with a social mission of empowering people to "fulfill their God-given purpose," then refocused in 2008 to sex trafficking, eventually changing its name to Courage Worldwide to reflect its global aspirations.

In recent years, the organization has gained favor in Sacramento's philanthropic community, collecting millions in donations while promoting the grandiose vision of expansion.

This year, though, the organization's fundraising practices uncorked a controversy when Williamson and her board quietly decided to close the Northern California facility, a move they say is temporary. The four remaining girls were given seven-day notices and the home closed June 13, with most of the staff laid off over the summer.

The organization told regulators in June it needed a temporary "pause" to prepare for next year's overhaul in how the state handles placements of troubled youths, which aims to phase out long-term group homes in favor of more family-based care.

However, Courage Worldwide made no public announcement about its pause and continued to actively solicit money. The Bee's investigation into Courage House and its closure prompted several major donors to withdraw or curtail their pledges.

From the start, the organization has been open about the role Christianity plays in its mission, and its reliance on fundraising from churches. The Courage Worldwide website now includes a blog post entitled, "Churches are Rising Up to Stand with Courage Worldwide" that lists 25 pastors supporting the group.

Documents and emails obtained by The Bee illustrate how staff operations at times have been intertwined with religious pursuits. The Midthuns often were at the center, along with former program director Herrmann, urging prayer sessions and "battle worship nights" to defeat evil.

"We are calling for a corporate fast for Courage Worldwide for the following tuesdays in October (October 9, 16, 23 and 30th) as well as a special 'Battle Worship Night' October 31, Halloween night (location TBA)," Midthun wrote to staffers, board members and supporters in October 2012.

Midthun warned of a "strategic attack against our reputation" and the finances of the organization, as well as the private business run by Williamson and her husband, Mike. The email does not explain the source of those perceived attacks.

"We feel the only way to reverse these spiritual battles or assignment against CWW is on our knees in prayer and working as hard as we can," Midthun wrote.

Stieglitz of Bayside Church conducted one such service at the group home, according to an email a week later.

"Dr. Gil led the leadership of Courage Worldwide in prayer at Courage House to battle the demonic strongholds at the home in Nor Cal and we all sensed it was very much connected to all over our homes," Midthun wrote. "We came together on our knees with confession and communion, with prayers, tears and worship to battle for our home, our staff and the girls. We sensed a breakthrough in the spirit."

In February 2012, Herrmann announced that Midthun and her husband, Joel, had been appointed as "Courage House Spiritual Directors" and that staffers should "pray for extra protection, strength, discernment AND that God would continue to reveal himself to all the girls at Courage House!"

Courage House also offered to underwrite the cost of prayer sessions with a pastor it brought in for "individual prayer counseling sessions with staff, volunteers, families and our girls!" according to a January 2012 email from Herrmann with the subject line "Pastor Joe Appointments."

"Pastor Joe normally charges \$100 for individual prayer counseling sessions," Herrmann wrote to staff. "Courage to Be You is willing to cover 25% of the cost of an appointment with Pastor Joe.

"Please pay the \$75 to him directly ..."

The fight against evil also extended to Courage Worldwide's home in Tanzania, where Courage House officials wrote in an Oct. 24, 2012, email after a trip there that the girls "are still experiencing a lot of demonic attacks."

"During this trip we have found out quite a bit about some significant amount of witchcraft that was done on the property previously over a number of years (prior to Courage House). We have also been spending time praying with the girls and brought in some local experts in the area of witchcraft to help pray with them individually."

A prayer for rescue

Even former employees of Courage House who identified themselves as people of deep faith said they viewed the corporate culture as overbearing and some of its practices as inappropriate for the girls.

Arlicia Lorentty, a former social worker at Courage House, said the organization's religious convictions initially were part of the attraction to work there, but that she later came to believe Williamson was "misusing faith" with her dramatic fundraising appearances aimed at "pulling at people's heartstrings."

"As a person who is a Christian, and very much believes God has a heart for this population, I don't think this is what he meant," said Lorentty, who left in 2015.

"The use of God's name for fundraising – that's the other part that really, really bothers me," she said. "... She's exploiting our faith, she's exploiting these people's generosity."

Several former staff members said that the religious intensity continued as the organization grew - along with its pool of government contributions.

Today, Courage Worldwide boasts on its website that its therapeutic trauma program for girls is administered by psychologist Benjamin Keyes of Regent University, a private school in Virginia founded by conservative Christian minister and broadcaster Pat Robertson. Courage Worldwide explains that the program is a "Christian therapeutic model" known as Healing Emotional Affective Responses to Trauma (H.E.A.R.T.)

Lauren Conklin, who worked at Courage House for four years, said she was uncomfortable with some of her bosses' expectations. At one staff meeting last year, she said, Williamson wanted to wash her employees' feet, symbolic of Jesus' gesture to his disciples.

"I said 'no,' " she said.

Linda Fiore, the group home administrator at the time the home closed, said she was not at work when the ritual with the oil and crosses occurred. But she said she attended a staff meeting later at which Courage House officials recounted the event and described their success at driving out evil forces.

"I was just shocked," said Fiore, who went out on medical leave in June and later was laid off. "It was very uncomfortable just being there."

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AS A PERSON WHO IS A CHRISTIAN, AND VERY MUCH BELIEVES GOD HAS A HEART FOR THIS POPULATION, I DON'T THINK THIS IS WHAT HE MEANT ... SHE'S EXPLOITING OUR FAITH, SHE'S EXPLOITING THESE PEOPLE'S GENEROSITY.

Arlicia Lorentty, a former social worker at Courage House

Faith-based groups in California and elsewhere are continuing to forge relationships with government to help sex-trafficking victims. Many say they are well aware of the boundaries.

Last year, officials announced that the Alameda County District Attorney's Office was teaming up with Catholic Charities of the East Bay to create a safe home in the Bay Area for girls recovering from sex trafficking. Mary Kuhn, Catholic Charities communication director, said the home is "on path" to open in 2017 and will seek to become licensed by the state.

"It will be our obligation to meet those requirements," she said.

"We do not discriminate. Our services are not about proselytizing," she said. "Our services are about meeting the needs of people."

Mandy Porter, who coordinates a faith-based alliance to help trafficking victims, said Christian groups and volunteers must be extremely careful not to thrust their faith upon this population, or be perceived as trying to control or manipulate them.

"The idea of choice is so important when treating a trafficking victim because they've had so many choices taken away," said Porter of the Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking. "... We don't want to be another form of coercion, another thing they have to do in order to belong."

Courage House officials say they believe they are in good standing with the state, and that they're working to reopen in early 2017. Fundraising efforts continue.

A Dec. 9 fundraising letter posted on the Courage Worldwide website and sent to supporters includes a "giving card" that asks recipients to make a choice: a one-time financial gift; a set monthly contribution; or a commitment to "praying for more children to be rescued out of sex trafficking."

Marjie Lundstrom: 916-321-1055, @MarjieLundstrom
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A Possession in Virginia - My Haunted Life Too

myhauntedlifetoo.com

09 December 2016 | Haunted houses, Your Stories, Your True Encounters

This story took place twenty-six years ago. My dad told me about this incident and I think it's probably one of the scariest things I've ever heard. My father does not have much of a sense of humor, so I'm pretty sure he didn't fabricate any part of it.

When my mom was pregnant with me we lived in a rural part of Virginia. My mom arrived home after giving birth to me but her health began to worsen with time and it made my dad worried. He consulted a lot of doctors who deemed it was normal because my mom was anemic. They prescribed a lot of medicines but nothing seemed to work.

One early morning dad got up to go to the bathroom. When he was coming back to the room, he heard someone, or something, sigh. He thought my mom was probably sleep talking and didn't pay any attention to it. The sighing continued and then he heard me crying. He rushed to the room only to be filled with absolute horror. What he saw was my mom lying in bed with her hands, legs and head bending outwards with me crying uncontrollably. He froze on the spot but soon recovered, picked me up and ran out to call the neighbors for help. When the neighbors came, they saw my mom lying there. She had passed out. My father tried to explain what had happened and they told him about a family who had lived in our house some time before.

Apparently, a family used to live in the same house. A husband, his wife and his mother. The guy and his mother were abusive and they tortured the wife whenever they pleased. The wife soon became pregnant but the family accused her of carrying someone else's child. She denied it and protested the accusations laid on her. This made her husband and her mother-in-law furious and they killed her in a fit of rage. They dumped her body somewhere and ran away.

It was the belief of our heavily Catholic neighbors that my mom was possessed by the spirit of the woman. Dad didn't believe it at first—but started to wonder when they gave him a book about possession. With things not getting any better my father asked a priest to come and see the house.

A couple of days later, the priest visited. As soon as he entered the house, my mom started acting weird, sneering and hissing at him. As soon as he saw that he knew that something was going on. He blessed her and ordered the entity living inside my mom to get out. At first, she refused. But then, the priest threw some holy water at her, causing her to scream in pain. He then ordered her to get out again and to tell him where she was buried. Reluctantly, she did and left my mom's body. My mom passed out again.

After this incident, we left that house and never even went near it. My mom never even knew what happened to her and died several years later in a car accident. My dad decided to never talk regarding this incident. I would appreciate any insight you have regarding this incident.

Submitted by Lynne Barry

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HOMESTEAD - SOUTH DADE DECEMBER 14, 2016 8:00 PM

Python found in South Dade with its mouth sewn shut. Could it be Vodou?





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1 of 3



BY CARLI TEPROFF AND CHABELI HERERRA cteproff@miamiherald.com

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When a call came in about a large python in the backyard of a South Miami-Dade home, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Lt. Scott Mullin expected to find a full-grown snake that could potentially be a challenge for him.

Instead, what Mullin found in the yard of the home in the 15000 block of Southwest 25th Terrace was a baby ball python that was no more than 14 inches long.

And adding to his confusion about the "frantic" call Sunday morning: The snake had its mouth sewn shut.

"I had never seen anything like it before," said Mullin, who is a member of Miami-Dade County's Venom One unit.



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Miami-Dade's Venom One handles more than just poisonous snake bites

Lt. Lisa Wood, a member of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's Venome One unit, takes viewers on a tour of Miami's "wilder side." Jose A. Iglesias - Miami Herald

Mullin, who said the family had no clue how the serpent got there, took the snake to a local reptile rescue group. Mullin assisted the rescuer in removing the thread from the snake's mouth.

"It could have been there for a month," said Mullin. "It was really in bad shape. It's horrible."

Because the snake's mouth was shut for so long, it had gotten a fungal infection. Mullin said the rescue group is working with a vet to rehabilitate the snake.

Meanwhile, Mullin turned to Facebook to see if anyone knew why a snake would have its mouth sewn shut. His post was shared almost 5,000 times, with many calling the snake's treatment animal cruelty.



I had a strange call today. Now you may think any call I run at Venom One would be strange but this one was a first. As you can see I picked up this baby Ball Python. It was found outside a home in South Dade. The family had never seen it before. I reached down and gently picked it up.

Now I have never come across a Ball Python that was not a sweet hart. They are by nature very docile snakes. They truly make a great pet. For those of you that are not snake people Ball... See more



Some suggested the act could have been related to Vodou or Santeria.

Nelson Hernandez, the owner of a botanica and pet shop, Viejo Lazaro in Flagami, said the practice of sewing a python's mouth shut is closely related to a dark sect of Vodou and a desire to put a curse on someone.

The snake, which some religions consider most related to the devil because of the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, is often the animal of choice for dark magic.

Vodou practitioners will write a person's name on a piece of paper, gather other items related to that person and insert them into the snake and sew its mouth shut. Mullin said nothing was found in the snake, but it's possible they could have disintegrated.

"It creates a state of agony in the animal," Hernandez said. "It's so that the human [who is being cursed] feels dragged, agonized, desperate.

"It's very dark witchcraft."

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'ABDUCTED BY ALIENS IN ROSWELL': Bizarre claims from residents of world's UFO mecca express.co.uk

RESIDENTS of Roswell claim they have been abducted by aliens in the town which is at the heart of the UFO mystery.

By Jon Austin

PUBLISHED: 15:36, Tue, Dec 13, 2016 | UPDATED: 16:25, Tue, Dec 13, 2016



YouTube

A family claimed they lost over an hour on the way to Roswell after a UFO encounter.

Reports of seeing aliens, missing time, and memories of being abducted in the New Mexico town have been reported to UFO investigators.

The US-based Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) has received reports from people who claim the bizarre events happened to them in the town.

Roswell has been at the heart of the UFO scene since in July 1947 the military sensationally announced in a press release it had found the remains of a crashed flying

saucer in the desert nearby.

But the following day it retracted the statement, saying it was in fact a damaged US Air Force air balloon.

Witnesses later came forward to say there had been alien bodies within the "crashed craft", which along with the wreckage were then taken away.

One bizarre case was reported to MUFON as happening on August 8 last year at 8.09pm.

The anonymous witness said objects were found in the back of a work colleague's head after the alleged strange event.

The report said: "This event caused a very serious altercation between my colleagues and myself.

"The abduction of (name removed by MUFON) lasted approximately two hours of which he cannot remember.

"After a trip to the local hospital several small objects were found in the back of his head."

No other evidence was provided to corroborate the alleged discovery at the unnamed hospital.

However, a photograph of an alleged UFO was provided.

Another report concerned allegations from February 18 2014 at midnight.

The report in this case said: "Subject's son, while staying in a trailer park, saw two grey entities.

Roswell has been at the heart of the UFO myth since 1947.

After a trip to the local hospital several small objects were found in the back of his head.

Unnamed witness report

"One was short and one was very tall.







"He can't remember what happened after that.

"Subjects son has had nightmares about being abducted and is frightful of the experience so much so he can't sleep at night."

One detailed report sent to MUFON relations to events on March 1 1969 at 8pm.

It described how a family of five were driving from Lovington to Roswell to visit relatives.

The report author said they were with their parents and two brothers.

They said: "At about an hour into the drive I noticed a bright object to the right of the car and mentioned it.

"Immediately, this object was directly above the car. At the same time, the radio went to static and we heard the speedometer cable break, and it actually felt like the hair on my head was standing up.

"There was no sound, but there was light everywhere. The object, above, was so large that I could see it from the back seat as I looked straight ahead.

"I had never been so terrified in my life and I just "froze" where I was.

"My middle brother was climbing between the front and back seats, and my youngest brother was only three, so he didn't seem to react.

"The scariest part, to me, was that I saw a huge black eye staring directly at me from the window beside me."

They said the shape of the eye was a translucent black teardrop shape.

The report added: "The next time I remembered anything our car was heading toward a ditch alongside the road.

"Dad quickly turned the steering wheel and kept the car on the road.

"We were all so terrified that all of us were completely silent.

"We soon pulled into our grandparents driveway to see the frantic looks on their faces."

The report claimed there had been a loss of time s a result of the happening.

It added: "My grandfather said, 'what happened I was just about to call the State Police to look for you'.

"My grandfather asked what took us so long. A one and a half trip took three hours. I don't remember almost anything of what was said, but I remember the feeling of terror that gripped us all."

The author was 54 when the report was made in 2007, while the brothers were 51 and 44.

The parents were in their seventies.

The report added: "I have had nightmares throughout the years although they have lessened with time.

"I am still very afraid of being abducted, and my heart races every time I think about it.

"I have told a few people about this event, but probably no more than 20. Strangely, almost everyone seems to believe me.

"I would like to know what happened but at the same time I am too terrified to know any more."

The account bears many similarities to other accounts of missing time after a static feeling after an apparent UFO hovered above and stopped a car.

MUFON, the world's largest organisation dedicated to UFO and alien research has received many similar reports from across the globe.

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"Coal Oil Johnny" Killed.



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, December 10, 2016

"COÁL OÍL"JOHNNY" KILLED.

(From Cincinnati Commercial Tribune July 21, 1883)

"Coal Oil Johnny" Killed.

Tragic End of One of the Most Notorious Swindlers in the Country.

Shot by His Jealous Wife.

A Bagnio in Terre Haute the Scene of the Killing—Local Experience of John and Sadie Hall—The Climax of a Life of Crime.

Special to the Commercial Gazette.

Terre Haute, Ind., July 20 – The city was startled this morning by a report that another unprovoked murder had been added to the list of crimes enacted here. The murder took

place just after daylight this morning, in a Second street bagnio run by Aggie Roland, and possesses much of a sensational nature.

John B. Hall, a street vender, possessed of a number of aliases, but better known by the sobriquet of "Coal Oil Johnny," was the victim of the crime committed by his wife, who found him occupying a room with one Maud Hunter, an inmate of the house. Hall and his wife had quarreled during the day, and when he closed up his day's business, instead of returning to his rooms at the St. Charles Hotel, he started out on a spree. He finally wound up at 2 o'clock this morning by retiring at Roland's house. His wife started out in search of him, and, in a hack, made a tour of the open saloons, but did not find him. She heard about 3 o'clock of his visit to Roland's, and with the hack driver entered the house, representing to the driver that her husband had a large amount of money on his person, which she feared he would lose. After a number of inquiries regarding accommodations for the night, she inquired if a certain friend of hers was at the house, describing her husband as the friend. Learning that he was, she asked to see him, and was conducted to the door of his room. She knocked, and was admitted by the Hunter girl. Entering the room, she found her husband asleep in bed. She walked to his side, and after gazing at him in silence turned as if to leave. Lying on a bureau at the head of the bed was revolver, which Hall placed there after retiring. She saw it, and

seizing the weapon, she pointed it full at the breast of the sleeping man and fired. The ball lodged in the right breast, producing instant death. The shock threw the body to the floor, the head and shoulders under the bed. Not a word had been spoken, and the shooting had taken place so unexpectedly that neither of the three witnesses could have interfered.

Mrs. Hall gave herself up, and has engaged attorneys for her defense and they refuse to allow her to be interviews or to testify at the Coroner's inquest. This evening she regrets the deed, and acts as if partly insane.

The murdered man was noted as one of the most expert bunko steerers and confidence men of the day, and had traveled under a number of aliases. His mother lives in St. Joseph, Mo., and she was notified of his death.

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San Francisco area couple awake to mountain lion killing a deer on their porch upi.com



A mountain lion stands over the deer it killed on a couple's porch in Hillsborough, Calif. Screenshot: Storyful

HILLSBOROUGH, Calif., Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A San Francisco area couple woke up in the early morning hours to investigate a sound that turned out to be a mountain lion attacking a deer on their front porch.

Mary Mines and Peter Rauenbuehler said they awoke to a sound outside their Hillsborough bedroom window about 3:30 a.m. Wednesday

that they initially identified as a far less dangerous animal.

"I didn't have my glasses on so when I looked through the peephole I thought it was a coyote," Mines told KGO-TV. "And I turned to Peter and I said, 'There's a coyote on our front porch,' because we have a lot here. I opened the door and I looked and I said, 'That's not a coyote, that's a much bigger animal."

Mines quickly shut the door and the couple took to their window, where they saw the mountain lion.

Rauenbuehler posted a video to Facebook showing the mountain lion dragging away the deer it had killed on their porch. The deer had apparently been eating flowers on the porch when the cougar attacked.

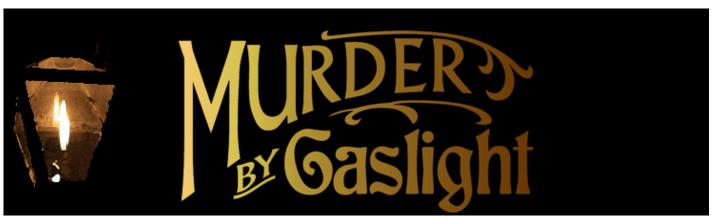
"He dragged the deer over the railing because there was deer hair over the top," Rauenbuehler said. "And the dogs didn't seem to intimidate the mountain lion at all. They were barking pretty crazy."

The couple said they had never seen a mountain lion so close before.

"We told the children to be careful when they're out and be aware," Mines said. "And to carry a stick or umbrella with them, to be big and loud if they see something."

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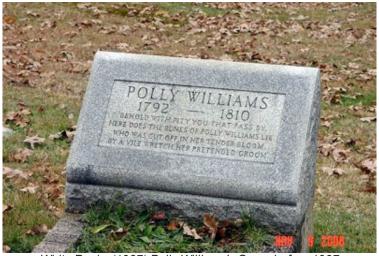
"...cut off in her youthful bloom"



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, January 19, 2013

"...cut off in her youthful bloom"



White Rocks (1937) Polly Williams's Grave before 1927

Who was cut off in her youthful bloom; By a vile wretch, her pretended groom. In August of 1810, four little girls picking berries at the foot of a precipice near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, discovered the broken body of a beautiful young woman. She was identified as Polly Williams, last seen walking to White Rocks to meet her fiancé Philip Rogers. Though the mysteries of Polly Williams's death have endured for two centuries, her story is neatly summarized the words engraved on her tombstone:

Behold with pity, you that pass by; Here doth the bones of Polly Williams lie;

Date: August 13, 1810

Location: Uniontown, Pennsylvania

Victim: Mary (Polly) Williams

Cause of Death: Blows to the head

Accused: Philip Rogers

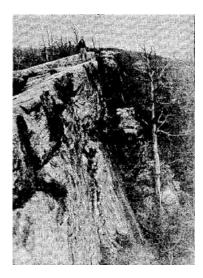
Recording: "Polly Williams" (Devon Flaherty)

Synopsis:

The story of Polly Williams's death has survived primarily due to the folk ballads that it inspired and it is believed that the words on her tombstone come from a now forgotten song. The most popular of the ballads, "Polly Williams" fits the "murdered-girl" pattern, in which an innocent young woman is seduced by an unscrupulous lover, he promises to marry her but instead lures her to a secluded location and violently kills her. This has been a very popular genre in American folk music and a very powerful narrative in which facts are often lost or distorted to better fit the story to the format. Most notably, in the ballad of Naomi Wise, the innocent young girl of the song was, in fact, a woman approaching middle age who already had two bastard children. Some folklorists have been skeptical of the Polly Williams legend as well.

According to the story, Polly Williams (whose real name was probably Mary Williams), a poor but beautiful girl from New Salem, Pennsylvania, attracted the attention of her wealthy neighbor, Philip Rogers, in 1809. Polly, seventeen years old at the time, is described as "singularly beautiful," with deep blue eyes and golden curls. Rogers was twenty-four, short and thick set, but "manly and agreeable, with a winning manner and a smooth beguiling tongue."

Polly's parents had moved away from New Salem to find work, and left Polly with her uncle, Major Jacob Moss, to work as a housekeeper. Struck by her beauty, Philip Rogers seduced Polly and promised to marry her, but the wedding was postponed several times. Rogers's parents were opposed to his marriage to a girl so poor and it is doubtful that he ever intended to go through with it. In some versions of the story he had already tried to drown her in the Monongahela River and had once tried to poison her.



But Polly remained faithful and had no doubt that her lover would be true to his word. Early accounts suggest that Polly may have been pregnant, though this detail has been omitted from more modern versions of the story. She left her home on August 13, 1810, telling her friends and family that she was walking to Woodbridgetown—thirteen miles away—where she and Philip Rogers would be married. Polly was never again seen alive.

She had fallen from the top of White Rocks, far above the spot where her body was found, but the wounds were more severe than could be explained by the fall. She appeared to have been struck in the head by a rock before falling and her arms were bruised as if held during a struggle. Some accounts say there were marks on her fingers, as if pounded while she held on to the cliff ledge. The coroner's jury ruled that she had been "murdered by some person unknown."

The body was buried before it could be identified. When Major Moss heard the news, he had the body exhumed and identified the girl as his niece, Polly Williams. He told the story of her planned marriage and Philip Rogers was arrested on suspicion of murder.

Trial: November 22, 1810

In 1893, during a move to a new courthouse, Fayette County employees discovered the transcripts of Philip Rogers's trial, held some 77 years earlier. Rogers's indictment read as follows:

The Grand Inquest that is now for the body of the county of Fayette, upon their oath solemnly affirm and do present that Phillip Rogers, late of the county aforesaid, not having the fear of God before his eyes but being mad and aided by the devil on the 14th day of August, 1810, with force and arms at the county aforesaid in and upon Mary Williams, in the peace of God and the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in there and then having feloniously, willfully and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault and that the said Philip Rogers, a certain stone of no value, which he, the said Philip Rogers, in both his hands then and there, had and held in and upon the back of the head and side of the face of her, the said Mary Williams, then and there feloniously, willfully and of his malice aforethought did strike and the said Philip Rogers with the stone aforesaid, do as aforesaid, had and held the aforesaid Mary Williams, in and upon the back of the head, the side of the face of her, the said Mary Williams, several mortal wounds, of the length of three inches and of the depth of one inch of which said mortal wounds the said Mary Williams then and there instantly died.

Philip Rogers's family spared no expense in his defense, bringing in Senator James Ross from Pittsburgh as his lawyer. Rogers admitted to meeting Polly the night of the murder and admitted to quarrelling with her, but denied pushing her over the cliff. He said they had separated and implied that she had lost her way and fallen from the top of the rocks.

Though the public believed Rogers to be guilty and the judge remarked that the evidence against him was "very strong," there was not enough evidence for a conviction. The trial lasted less than one day and Rogers was acquitted.

Verdict: Not guilty.

Aftermath:

Though Rogers was acquitted, violent threats against his life made it impossible for him to remain in Fayette County. He moved to Green County where he worked as a mason, married and raised a family. Rogers died at age 74. He never admitted to the murder.

With the case more than two hundred years old, and so much of the information coming from local legend, it is impossible to truly know very much about the people involved or what really happened to them. Olive Woolley Burt, who collected one version of the song "Polly Williams" in 1922 attempted to research the real Polly Williams. In the 1790 census she found a Polly Williams in eastern Pennsylvania, who was head of a household that included a male child under sixteen. Ms. Burt traced this Polly Williams to a land purchase in south central Pennsylvania. If this was the

same Polly Williams, then she surely was not a girl of 18. But there is no evidence that it is the same person, especially since the real name of the murdered girl appears to have been Mary.

Sam P. Bayard, another collector, commented on the name discrepancy. In *American Ballads and Folk Songs*, John A. Lomax quotes him:

"The victim's name was not Polly Williams; but for some reason, the composers of the song chose this conventional name, and it is this name which is always used by those who tell the story."

Some newspaper accounts have inexplicably stated that Philip Rogers had an alias: Grant Fielding, and quote his mother as calling him Grant.



Sometime before 1860 an anonymous man purchased a stone for the grave of Polly Williams in what is now White Rocks Cemetery. By the 1890s the stone had been completely chipped away by souvenir seekers and the grave was marked by a wooden plank. In 1927 the Polly Williams Sunday School Class of the Little White Rock Church raised money for a replacement stone. That stone met the same fate, and in September 1972 the class erected a third stone. All three bore the same tragic inscription.

Sources:

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Ballad Lyrics and Poems:

"Polly Williams" (anon.)

"Polly Williams" (Samuel Little)

"The Murder of Polly Williams" (A. F. Hill)

2 comments:

erinM says:

Tebruary 19, 2013 at 10:33 AM

This comment has been removed by the author.

erinM says:

February 19, 2013 at 10:36 AM

Polly wasn't an uncommon nickname for Mary at the time. It's a derivative of Molly. In 1810 there were 2 free white females between 16 and 25 living in the home of a Jacob Moss of Fayette, Penn. One of them could have been Polly.

Post a Comment

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Driverless bus 'Olli' undergoes testing in Berlin

thelocal.de



Olli on a test trip in Schöneberg. Photo: DPA

DPA/The Local 15 December 2016 08:30 CET+01:00

The Deutsche Bahn are sponsoring a project to build driverless busses, which developers claim will change the face of public transport in Berlin.

A prototype bus, nicknamed Olli and built by the US firm Local Motors, is currently undergoing testing in the Schöneberg district of Berlin, with plans in place to build 50 models in 2017.

The miniature bus offers space for 12 passengers and drives at speeds of up to 20 kilometres per hour.

When Olli eventually hits the streets, passengers will be able to call him via an app and will then be able to chat with him about the weather, good cafes in the area, or the best public transport connections, the Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) reported on Wednesday.

"In five years, hundreds of autonomous vehicles will be travelling the streets of Berlin waiting to be called into service," Damien Declercy, executive vice president of Local Motors, told the SZ.

During the testing phase, the vehicle is learning to identify hazards in the street, such as pedestrians and cyclists, as well as learning street markings and routes.

While this type of technology may seem like something out of a sci-fi movie, driverless cars are already a fact of life in Germany and other countries.

In September a Tesla electric car crashed into a tourist bus on a motorway in northern Germany, after the driver - who was the only one slightly injured - claimed he had activated the autopilot system.

In Washington DC meanwhile, self-driving busses already operate on streets in one suburb.

But it seems that it is unlikely that the bus will have such a smooth transition from test track to street in Germany.

German law states that an automobile must have a human at the wheel at all times who can take control of the vehicle in case of an emergency.

A spokesperson for the Berlin Senate, meanwhile, told the SZ that self-driving busses could "cause shock among other drivers, leading to fatal accidents."

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Thursday 15 December 2016

Pensioner Jim Hughes has left neighbours openedmouthed after turning a 14ft cock in his front garden into a festive display.

The 77-year-old sculpted an old cherry tree into a cockerel while his wife Moira was on holiday earlier this year.

He got up his ladder, trimmed the ivy-covered tree to make it look like the 14ft bird and then stuck pieces of red plastic on its head for its beak and a comb.

The transformation took grandad Jim just 30

minutes with a pair of shears and secateurs and created a local tourist attraction.

But Jim has now decorated the massive cockerel, named Jock, with festive lights in time for Christmas for neighbours and visitors to enjoy.

He said: "People are coming from far away to come and see it and they are taking pictures beside it. It's turned into a bit of an attraction.

"I keep trimming it and keep it in shape. I've put Christmas lights on it and people are enjoying it. It's not for me to judge, but I think it looks alright.

"It will be there as long as I'm here."

Jim's wife Moira, 73, was left stunned when she returned from holiday and spotted the massive cockerel in their front garden this summer.

And the pensioner says it has become a bit of an attraction with people stopping to take photos of it outside his home in East Wemyss, Fife.

He added: "Originally, it was an old cherry blossom tree. It got that big that I was worried it would be blown over and hit a car.

"The main trunk is from the cherry tree and ivy has grown up it. I cut it down and shaped it."

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http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38161743



The Ktunaxa Nation Council are battling a proposed ski resort in British Columbia's Jumbo Valley

Ktunaxa Nation Council

A landmark religious freedom case between a ski resort and a First Nation will play out in Canada's highest court.

The Ktunaxa First Nation say the resort would desecrate land where their sacred Grizzly Bear Spirit lives.

British Columbia says adequate accommodations have been made.

It will be the first time the Supreme

Court determines the merits of an indigenous religious freedom claim under the Canada's rights charter.

In March 2012, the British Columbia (BC) government approved the disputed Jumbo Glacier ski resort development planned in a remote valley in the province's mountainous southeast.

The contentious project would be built on the site of an abandoned saw mill in remote BC, in a region revered by backcountry skiers and snowboarders for its deep snow, wilderness, and stunning beauty. It is also a significant grizzly bear territory.

Image caption

The Ktunaxa Nation have resisted a scheme to build the Jumbo Valley resort since it was first proposed in 1991.

They challenged the BC government's approval in court, saying the province failed to properly consider the sacred significance of the area. Both the BC Supreme Court and BC Court of Appeal have dismissed the Ktunaxa Nation claim.

The Ktunaxa say the site, which they call "Qat'muk" is "where the Grizzly Bear Spirit was born, goes to heal itself, and returns to the spirit world".

They are arguing the bear spirit would leave the area if the resort is built and they would no longer have access to its spirit and guidance.

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) executive director Josh Paterson says the Supreme Court hearing on Thursday will be the first time First Nations spirituality is considered in land use decisions like the Jumbo Valley resort.

"People would understand if this were a proposal that would destroy the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem or the Temple Mount," he said.

The BCCLA is among the many interveners in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms case.

Other Ktunaxa Nation allies include locals, conservationists and California-based alpine outfitter Patagonia, which has thrown its support behind a campaign to "Keep Jumbo Wild" and financed a documentary on the tug-of-war over the resort.

Another First Nation, the Shuswap Band, which also has claims to the territory, have supported the Jumbo Valley ski resort proposal since 2004, when it first received its environmental certificate. That certificate has since expired.

Oberto Oberti, the Vancouver-based developer behind Jumbo Glacier Resort, said he still hopes he and his partners will one day build a four-season glacier skiing destination in the valley.

He said they have tried to address concerns and adjust the project to accommodate the local community over the last 20 years.

And Oberti says he does not believe the resort would violate anyone's ability to believe in their faith or to practise it but is leaving it up to "constitutional scholars" to debate its impact on religious freedoms.

"We are just architects and will stick to that," he said.

Image copyright Getty Images

Spinning ice disc caught on camera in Michigan river

upi.com



A large disc of ice spins in Michigan's Muskegon River. Screenshot: Weather Channel

HOUGHTON LAKE, Mich., Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A Michigan woman on a snowmobiling trip captured video of a bizarre phenomenon: a disc of ice slowly rotating on the surface of a river.

Karla S. Dahms posted a video to Facebook showing the strange rotating ice circle she spotted in the Muskegon River, near the city of

Houghton Lake.

Dahms said she had never seen anything like the ice disc in the river before.

Researchers determined the ice discs occur when cold air comes in contact with an eddy in the river and the ice forms into a circle, which rotates due to the current it creates by slowly melting.

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Man with TWO STONE facial tumour says he feels 'reborn' after having it removed

By Keyan Milanian 14:34, 14 DEC 2016 Updated 14:35, 14 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

A man says he has been 'reborn' after having a facial tumour weighing an astonishing two stone removed from his face.

Since the age of 12, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, 60, from Taplejung, in eastern Nepal, has suffered with Neurofibromatosis - where tumours grow along the nerves.

The condition meant he lived with a giant tumour that hung from his face that grew to be the same weight as a TODDLER.

And the growth, which he carried in a bag, even turned smelly after friction meant it became infected.





He was told by dozens of doctors that it could not be removed.

But he was given a glimmer of hope by Dr Jaswan Shakya, from Sushma Koirala Memorial Hospital, in Kathmandu, who said he could operate on it.

Dr Shakya, according to the Sun, said: "I have seen many patients with small tumors covering the face but never one as big as this.

"I was really shocked to see him at first. I've done these surgeries for many years but this is the biggest tumour I'd ever seen in Nepal."





appeared on
Krishna's head when
he was just 12 but it
grew over the years
until it dangled from
his face.

A small tumour first

As a result, he couldn't find a wife and struggled to work.

But he now says he

feels he has turned a corner after having it removed in a seven-hour operation that took place in April.

The mans 11kg facial tumour

Almost fully recovered, he said: "It's like a rebirth for me. I used to hate looking at myself in the mirror and nobody in my village talked to me but now life is very different.





"My life has drastically changed after the surgery.

"I am extremely thankful to the doctor for helping me. He has given me a completely new life."

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai

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told-in-Pictures.jpg'; }



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Murder Ballad Lyrics



Omie Wise

A song of the murder of Naomi Wise in North Carolina, 1807. Lyrics from The Mudcat Cafe.

The story: Poor 'Omie - The Murder of Naomi Wise

The Aludrat Cafe...etta

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OMIE WISE

Come all good people, I'd have you draw near, A sorrowful story you quickly shall hear; A story I'll tell you about Omie Wise, How she was deluded by Lewis's lies.

She promised to marry and use me quite well; But conduct contrary I sadly must tell, He promised to meet me at Adams's spring; He promised me marriage and many fine things.

Still nothing he gave, but yet flattered the case. He says, "We'll be married and have no disgrace, Come get up behind me, we'll go up to town. And there we'll be married, in union be bound."

I got up behind him, and straightway did go To the bank of Deep River where the water did flow; He says, "Now Naomi I'll tell you my mind, I intend here to drown you and leave you behind."

Welcome to Murder by Gaslight

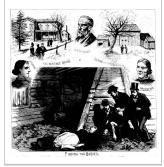


Greed, jealousy, revenge, obsession – the motives of America's gas-lit murders are universal and timeless. Yet their stories are tightly bound to a particular place and time; uniquely American, uniquely 19th Century.

From the Archives.

The Long Island Murders.

A series of violent home invasions in and around Brookville, Long Island in November 1883 and the months that followed left two people ...



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"O pity your infant and spare me my life; Let me go rejected and be not your wife;" "No pity, no pity," this monster did cry; In Deep river's bottom your body shall lie."

The wretch then did choke her, as we understand, And threw her in the river below the milldam; Be it murder or treason, O! what a great crime, To drown poor little Omie and leave her behind.

Omie was missing they all did well know, And hunting for her to the river did go; And there found her floating on the water so deep, Which caused all the people to sigh and to weep.

The neighbors were sent for to see the great sight, While she lay floating all that long night; So early next morning the inquest was held; The jury correctly the murder did tell.

Note: In 1808, in Randolph County NC, Johnathan Lewis murdered Naomi Wise, who he had gotten with child and promised to marry. Lewis escaped before conviction.

DT #627
Laws F4
@murder
filename[OMIEWISE
TUNE FILE: OMIEWISE
CLICK TO PLAY
RG





A sto-ry I'll tell you a- bout O- mie Wise, - How she was de- lu- ded by Lew- is- 's lies.



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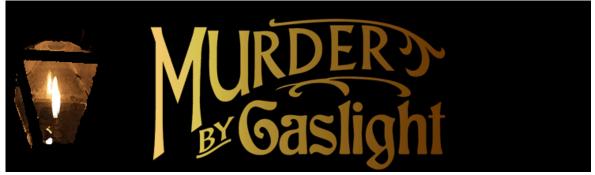


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told-in-Pictures.jpg'; }



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Murder Ballad Lyrics



Polly Williams

A ballad of the murder of Polly Williams in Pennsylvania, 1810. Lyrics from The Mudcat Cafe.

The story: "...cut off in her youthful bloom"

The Mudcat Café...etta

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POLLY WILLIAMS

Come all ye good people, wherever you be, Come listen awhile to my sad tragedy. It is of a young lady that was worthy of praise-At the age of nineteen she ended her days.

Long time she'd been courted, as I have heard say, And her lover to delude her took many a way. For soon as he found that her love he had gained, Her company he slighted, and her love he disdained.

And then to destroy her he contrived a plan: To this mountain conveyed her, as I understand. Oh, this innocent creature his mind did not know, And in hopes to be married with this traitor did go.

Welcome to Murder by Gaslight

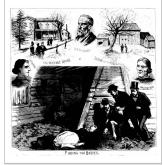


Greed, jealousy, revenge, obsession – the motives of America's gas-lit murders are universal and timeless. Yet their stories are tightly bound to a particular place and time; uniquely American, uniquely 19th Century.

From the Archives.

The Long Island Murders.

A series of violent home invasions in and around Brookville, Long Island in November 1883 and the months that followed left two people ...



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And when to this mountain he did her convey, Oh, he left her fair body for the varmints a prey. She was cruelly treated and shamefully used By this cruel tyrant - how could him excuse!

Which caused old and young to weep and to cry, And to find out this traitor they each one did try. He was apprehended, his cause to bewail-Straightway he was conducted to Uniontown jail.

There by judge and by jury he was proven out clear, And he now takes Polly Clayton, and he calls her his dear. But, like a deceiver, he'll live in despair Till the day of strict judgment when all must appear.

Oh the judge and the jury they all will be there, And with one accord the truth will declare. Oh, the impartial judge he will pass the decree, And this cruel tyrant condemned will be.

Come all ye good people who saw this object, Don't add nor diminish, deceive nor correct. This honored young lady was found in a gore, And her flesh by this traitor all mangled and tore.

Oh, it's every temptation is the future of some snare, And of all such false lovers I would have you beware. Oh, beware of false lovers who court in deceit, Lest, like Polly Williams, it will prove your sad fate

To be brought by a lover to shame and disgrace. And lose your sweet life in some wilderness place. They will hug you and kiss you, and call you their own, And when your back is turned they will leave you to mourn.

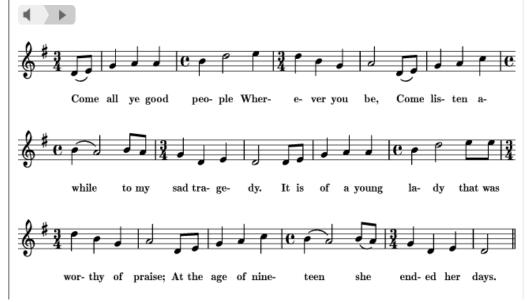
From American Ballads and Folk Songs, Lomax

Collected by S. Bayard from Nancy White and Annie Braden, PA Note: According to Bayard, this is based on an actual murder in 1810; the names have been changed, not to protect the innocent, but probably to scan better. The tune is a variant of the Wagoner's lad/Tarwathie family. RG @murder filename[POLLYWMS

TUNE FILE: POLLYWMS

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RG





Crime, Eccentricity and the Sporting Life in 19th Century America & Confessions of Jonathan Pratt

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A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Monday, November 2, 2009

Poor 'Omie - The Murder of Naomi Wise



The haunting folk ballad "Omie Wise" has kept the story of Naomi Wise's murder alive for more than two hundred years. According to legend, Naomi Wise, a poor but beautiful orphan girl, was courted by Jonathan Lewis, son of a wealthy farmer. His mother persuaded him to stop the courtship but not before Naomi became pregnant with Jonathan's child. To avoid marriage and scandal, Jonathan Lewis drowned Naomi Wise in Deep River. That is the traditional tale of Naomi Wise, but how much of it is true?

Date: Spring 1807

Location: Randolph County, North Carolina

Victim: Naomi Wise

Cause of Death: Drowning

Accused: Jonathan Lewis

Recording:

"Little Omie Wise" - Doc Watson

Synopsis:

Naomi Wise was extraordinarily beautiful, so the story goes. "Her size was medium, her figure beautifully formed, her face handsome and expressive, her eyes keen yet mild, her words soft and

winning." wrote nineteenth century author Braxton Craven. She was an orphan, indentured as a child to William and Mary Adams, farmers in Randolph County, North Carolina, who raised Naomi as a daughter.

Jonathan Lewis lived in Guilford County but worked in Asheboro as a clerk in a store owned by Benjamin Elliot. He boarded with his employer on workdays, and each Saturday night he would ride fifteen miles back to his family's home, each Sunday night he would ride back to Asheboro. His route took him past the Adams's farm. Craven described Lewis as, "a large well built dignified looking man. He was young, daring and impetuous. ...His smile was like sunbeams bursting through a cloud illuminated every continence upon which it fell." Naomi would watch in admiration as he rode by each week.

Once, as Naomi was carrying water from the spring, Jonathan stopped and asked if he could have a drink of water. She obliged, then he dismounted and helped her carry her buckets to the house. Naomi fell in love with Jonathan Lewis then, and he seemed smitten as well. He would stop on each journey and they would spend time together by Adams's spring.

Naomi thought that she and Jonathan would soon marry and began to prepare for the wedding. But Jonathan's mother had other ideas. His employer, Mr. Elliot, had a daughter, Hattie, who Mrs. Lewis thought would be a perfect match for her son. At his mother's insistence, Jonathan began courting Hattie Elliot, and would ride by Adams's farm without stopping.

Naomi's heart was broken. She thought she had been engaged to Jonathan Lewis but he proved faithless. When this news reached Hattie Elliot, she confronted Jonathan who said the rumors were untrue, he was never engaged to Naomi, he loved only Hattie.

One April afternoon Naomi picked up the pails and went to the spring to fetch some water. She never returned. By the spring a search party found a woman's footprints leading to a tree stump. On the other side of the stump were hoof prints. Naomi had used the stump to climb onto a horse, behind Jonathon Lewis. She thought he had come to marry her and got on his horse willingly. They stopped near a ford in Deep River; he dismounted and helped Naomi down. Then he strangled her and threw her into the river. When he knew she had drowned he rode away.

Naomi's body was found tangled in weeds growing near the shore of Deep River. Her neck had been bruised and the coroner gave the cause of death as "drowning by violence." His examination also revealed that Naomi had been pregnant when she died.

There was little question who was responsible. The sheriff and his deputy rode off to arrest Jonathan Lewis. He was captured and jailed, but they did not hold him long enough for a trial. He escaped after being held only thirty days.

That is the traditional story of Naomi Wise, first published in 1851 by Braxton Craven (under the name Charlie Vernon) and reprinted many time since. Craven's version is a somewhat romanticized version of the true story.

The facts in the case are sparse. Contrary to Craven's story (and Naomi's tombstone) she died in 1807, not 1808. Jonathan Lewis was arrested for the murder of Naomi Wise on April 8, 1807. His trial was scheduled for October 26, but he escaped from jail on October 9, and fled Randolph County. He was recaptured in 1811 but did not go to trial until two years later. He was tried and



found guilty of escaping from jail. He was never tried for the murder of Naomi Wise.

In her 2003 book, *Naomi Wise, Creation, Re-Creation and Continuity in an American Ballad Tradition*, Eleanor R. Long-Wilgus included a long poem entitled "A True Account of Nayomy Wise." The poem was handwritten by Mary Woody not long after the murder but was unknown until the 1980s. Mary Woody's very detailed account of the murder is quite different than Braxton Craven's. Not a beautiful orphan girl, Naomi Wise was quite a bit older than Jonathan Lewis, and already had two illegitimate children when she met him. She was not seeking marriage from Lewis but a payment so she would not name him

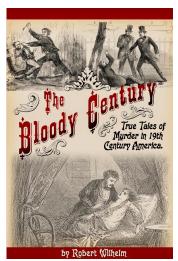
as father of her child, which, by the laws of North Carolina, would have required him to pay a sizeable basdardy bond to support the child.

Trial: October 4, 1813

Verdict: Jonathan Lewis was found guilty of breaking jail. He was fined "ten pounds and cost" and sentenced to thirty days in jail.

Aftermath:

In Craven's version Lewis was acquitted of Naomi's murder because the evidence was circumstantial and on his deathbed Jonathan Lewis admitted to drowning Naomi Wise, providing the story's needed closure. While this is the story that lives on in song and legend, in fact, no one knows who killed Naomi Wise.



This is one of 50 stories featured in the new book The Bloody Century

Books:

Long-Wilgus, Eleanor R. *Naomi Wise: Creation, Re-Creation, and Continuity in an American Ballad Tradition*. New York: Chapel Hill, 2003. Print.

Wellman, Manly Wade. Dead and Gone. New York: University of North Carolina, 1980.

Craven, Braxton. *Naomi Wise, or,: The wrongs of a beautiful girl (A true story).* 1896 (originally 1851)

Gravesite (from Findagrave)

14 comments:

Asha says:

🕅 February 17, 2012 at 8:54 PM

This is the best "ballad" I have ever read. Absolutely loved it. I know it is bad to love the murder of an orphan, or a "cougar" which ever may have been true; but it is absolutely briliant. Do you know if there is any "new" ideas about what really happened?

Robert Wilhelm says:

February 21, 2012 at 12:58 PM

I think its OK to love the story without loving the crime. I haven't heard anything newer than the Eleanor Lont-Wilgus book.

Caroline says:

march 2, 2012 at 5:56 PM

Asha, I don't think it's bad. I'm the same way. I find murder cases revolting, yet strangely fascinating. Then again, I'm kind of morbid.

GMH says:

To November 29, 2012 at 3:39 AM

Asheville is nearly 3 hours west of Guilford County by interstate. Asheboro, which is due south, is located in Randolph County. Similar names - different geography.

GMH says:

To November 29, 2012 at 3:40 AM

Asheville is nearly 3 hours west of Guilford County by interstate. Asheboro, which is due south, is located in Randolph County. Similar names - different geography.

Robert Wilhelm says:

November 29, 2012 at 12:14 PM

You're right it should be Asheboro. I have changed the post.

Unknown says:

may 10, 2016 at 9:43 PM

I work in the plant in randleman that they say the stone that is built into the wall is the stone that they found her body at and there have been people say that she does not like men and that she haunts that plant I have never experienced but some people say the lights go out or flicker and they hear foot steps

Unknown says:

may 10, 2016 at 9:44 PM

I work in the plant in randleman that they say the stone that is built into the wall is the stone that they found her body at and there have been people say that she does not like men and that she haunts that plant I have never experienced but some people say the lights go out or flicker and they hear foot steps

Accounting Warrior says:

[™] July 21, 2016 at 8:58 PM

I know Bert Jansch's haunting rendition of the ballad "Omie Wise" from a Pentangle recording. I never knew it was based on people who really lived.

Accounting Warrior says:

[™] July 21, 2016 at 8:58 PM

I know Bert Jansch's haunting rendition of the ballad "Omie Wise" from a Pentangle recording. I never knew it was based on people who really lived.

Robert Wilhelm says:

[™] July 22, 2016 at 7:26 PM

I am a great fam of Bert Jansch, Pentangle as well. I will have to look for that recording.

RW.

Gyda says:

December 6, 2016 at 12:30 PM

This comment has been removed by the author.

Gyda says:

To December 6, 2016 at 12:32 PM

This comment has been removed by the author.

Gyda says:

\overline December 6, 2016 at 12:48 PM

Jonathan Lewis is a great-great (many great) uncle of mine. The entire Lewis family left town after the murder and decamped to New Albany Indiana.

Post a Comment

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Norway school accused of censoring Christmas songs



Photo: Vegard Wivestad Grøtt / NTB scanpix

NTB/The Local

news@thelocal.no

15 December 2016

13:53 CET+01:00

A primary school in Stavanger has been criticized for not allowing children to sing the hymn 'Deilig er jorden' at the school's Christmas party, but the school's principle says the media has gotten the story all wrong.

Children at Nylund School were told that they could not perform the song, which was written by Danish hymnist Bernhard Ingemann in 1850 to the tune of 'Fairest Lord Jesus'. Instead, they were only allowed to hum the melody.

In addition, other Christmas songs were altered to remove all references to Santa Claus and elves and the party itself was renamed from 'Christmas celebration' to 'December gathering'.

Stavanger Aftenblad originally reported the changes, which quickly spread throughout the national press.

The school's principle, Frøydis Anthonsen, told Stavanger Aftenblad that the changes were made so as not to offend anyone.

"Someone who doesn't want the Christmas message would perceive it as offensive that the word 'Christmas' is included, because they associate the word 'Christmas' with something Christian," she said.

But Anthonsen later said that she misspoke and denied that Christmas had been systematically stripped from the Christmas party.

"In a hurry I answered questions when the reporter called earlier today and without checking the matter further they published the story as if we wanted to change the Christmas songs," she told Dagbladet.

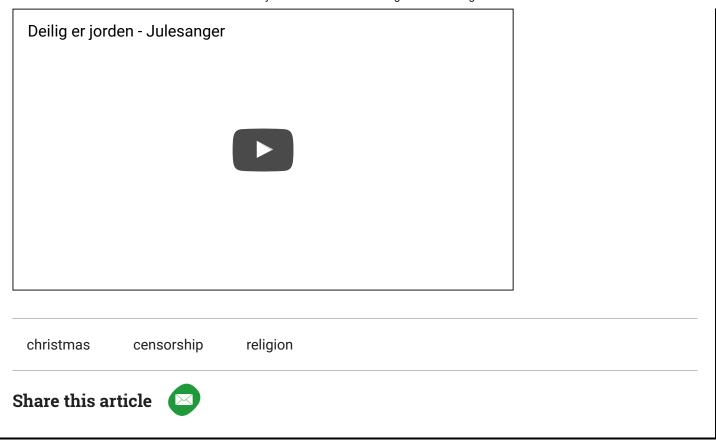
Anthonsen said Christmas songs had not actually been censored, but that the school's music teachers were making examples of what would happen if religious accommodation was taken "to the extreme".

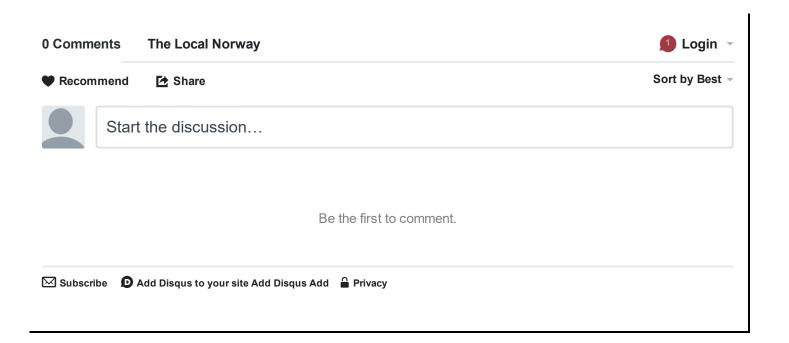
"The music teachers wrote a proposal for how it would look if we went to the extreme [and] took away all the words. 'Is that how we want it? What does society want? What do the parents want?' That was the discussion," she said.

Anthonsen said the amended Christmas songs reached one class's weekly schedule by mistake, leading to the misunderstanding that the songs had been changed.

She did, however, admit that the school had made changes to its annual Christmas celebration.

"What is true is that we are not going to church this year but will instead gather at school. There, we will of course sing the original Christmas songs. And next year we will be in the church again, and then those who do not want to take part can opt out," the principle said.



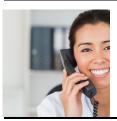


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Michael Björklund: 'Being a chef is crazy work'

Chef Michael Björklund tells The Local how he incorporates the uniqueness of the Åland islands into his cooking – and what more Nordic chefs need to do to put their food on the global map.



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A Tiny Version Of Hell On Earth Exists In Cleveland, Ohio

iflscience.com 12/12/2016, 14:59

BUSINESS INSIDER Inside a windowless concrete room in Cleveland, Ohio, scientists have built a tiny version of Hell on Earth.

Called the Glenn Extreme Environments Rig (GEER), the 14ton steel chamber can faithfully recreate the toxic, choking, and scorching-hot conditions on the surface of Venus — a oncehabitable twin of Earth gone very, very wrong.

Scientists at the NASA Glenn Research Center, where GEER is located, have been developing the project for the past 5 years and fired it up for the first time in 2014. Since then, researchers have lengthened their test runs and exposed all kinds of metals, ceramics, wires, mesh, plating, and electronics to conditions on "Venus" to see what lasts — and what dissolves into dust.

Danielle Andrew



NASA's GEER chamber in Cleveland. Ohio GEER/NASA Glenn Research Center

"In March 2015, we spent roughly 100 days at the surface of Venus, and the longest single stretch was 42 days," Lori Arnett, NASA's facility manager for GEER, told Business Insider.

Their hope? Learn how to build spacecraft that can last months or even years on Venus instead of being destroyed almost instantly.

"One of the last probes to visit Venus was Venera 13 in glenn extreme environments rig geer venus hell chamber [1982], and it only survived for about 2 hours and 7 minutes," said Gustavo Costa, a chemist and materials

scientist who's working with GEER. "Venus is very, very corrosive."

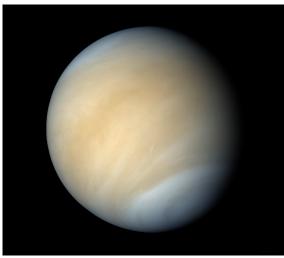
Until a modern spacecraft drops through the planet's thick atmosphere again and explores the surface, GEER is the best way to ask what it's actually like there.

"It's like Hell on Earth," Costa said. "It's very harsh."

Venus is Earth's deadly twin

Venus in true color NASA

The second planet from the sun was, and still is, very similar to Earth.



venus nasa

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Alien hunting gets HUGE boost as Artificial Intelligence joins search for extraterrestrial

express.co.uk



Alien hunting gets HUGE boost as Artificial Intelligence joins search for extraterrestrial

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) has joined the hunt for alien life throughout the

universe, massively increasing the chances of finding extra-terrestrials.

By Sean Martin

PUBLISHED: 17:20, Thu, Dec 8, 2016 | UPDATED: 17:25, Thu, Dec 8, 2016

Machine learning software, based on the algorithms used by Google and Netflix, has joined the hunt for aliens.

The computer has the ability to analyse star systems and planets and can decipher whether the planets could potentially sustain life.

The Al uses machine learning, which is a type of man-made intelligence that allows computers to learn through data that it is continuously fed – rather than humans having to update the software.

The machine, created by researchers at the University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada, is believed to be up to 1,000 times faster at predicting whether a planet is potentially habitable and can work around the clock, unlike humans, making it a massive boost in the search for aliens.

Do aliens exist?

Lead researcher of the study, Dan Tamayo from the Centre for Planetary Science at the university, said: "Machine learning offers a powerful way to tackle a problem in astrophysics, and that's predicting whether planetary systems are stable."

The research, published in the journal Astrophysical Journal Letters, explained: "In order to train our algorithms, we generated a data set of 5,000 N-body integrations of 3-planet systems over 107 orbits of the innermost body.

"We focus on 3- planet systems since there exists an analytic criterion for the case of two planets, and systems with more planets exhibit qualitatively similar behaviour."

The researchers will also use the Al tool to study Nasa's impending Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) which is set to launch next year.

Nasa's study will be a two-year mission that will look at the brightest stars that astronomers can find to see if they are part of a solar system.

Mr Tamayo said: "It could be a useful tool because predicting stability would allow us to learn more about the system, from the upper limits of mass to the eccentricities of these planets.

"It could be a very useful tool in better understanding those systems."

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A bonfire and processions mark the festival. Photo: GeneveTourisme/Olivier Miche

The Local 8 December 2016 14:33 CET+01:00

Geneva's most popular and enduring annual festival, The Escalade, takes place this weekend. The Local takes a look at the history of the event, and what's on offer this year.

What's it all about?

The tradition marks event on the night of December 11th, 1602, when the Duke of Savoy's army attempted a surprise attack on the state of Geneva under cover of darkness.

The Duke's idea was to let his best soldiers secretly scale the city's fortification walls to enter the city and open its gate from inside, allowing the troops in. (*Escaler* in French translates as "scale", or "climb".) Thanks to an alert guard, the invasion plans were thwarted. The bells of the cathedral and city churches rang out to wake the sleeping Genevans who took up arms and fought back, saving their city and driving back the Savoyard troops. The next day the people went to church to thank God for their deliverance. Ever since that time, the people of Geneva have remembered and celebrated their day of victory.

Doesn't a pot of soup come into it somewhere?

Yes, one famous example of bravery is attributed to Mère Royaume, who is said to have climbed onto the ramparts and poured her pot of hot soup over the head of a Savoyard soldier. Why she had broth on the boil in the middle of the night is anyone's guess.

When exactly does it take place?

The celebration gets going on December 9th at 6pm when muskets are fired from the cathedral marking the start of a procession from the old town to Saint-Gervais to pay tribute to the victims of the Escalade. This is followed by various activities in the old town on the 10th and 11th.



Photo: GeneveTourisme/Oliver Miche

What is the highlight?

The festival culminates with the Great Historical Procession from 5pm to 8.30pm on the 11th. A torchlit procession of people dressed in period costumes proceeds through the streets of the old city along both banks of the Rhone. Historic and legendary figures like Mère Royaume, armed with her pot, are represented. At several points along the traditional route, the procession stops and a

herald on horseback reads the proclamation of victory over the invaders. On arrival at St. Peter's Cathedral, the participants sing patriotic songs and a bonfire is lit.

What else is there to see?

Mock skirmishes, musket firing and demonstrations of sword and pike handling are among the things on offer throughout the two days. Stands and markets will sell everything from food and beverages, including Mère Royaume's famous soup and mulled wine, to swords, shields and halberds. This being Switzerland, you can also buy chocolate pots representing the soup cauldron. These come in all sizes and can be found in chocolate shops around Geneva. A Geneva tradition is that on the Friday evening the eldest and youngest members of the family join in smashing a chocolate pot to commemorate the famous victory.



Photo: GeneveTourisme/Ricardo de La Riva

What is there for children?

Various games and activities are on offer in the cathedral courtyard on Saturday from 2pm until 5pm and on Sunday from 11am until 3.30pm and at the Promenade de la Treille from 11am to 3.30 pm on Sunday. There will also be a lantern-lit procession for kids starting at the rue de l'Evêche at 7.45pm on the 10th and making its way to the Bourg-de-Four. Lanterns will be on sale beforehand.

More information on the Escalade can be found at the Compagnie de 1602 website

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Austin officials surprised by park condoms-in-trees campaign

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 10, 2016

Austin health department workers hung bags of condoms and information about safe sex from trees at a park — without informing their bosses or the local parks department, according to a newspaper report.

The bags in Walnut Creek Park, which has been pointed to as a place of HIV transmission particularly among gay men, were taken down Thursday, the Austin American Statesman (http://atxne.ws/2hiAkgp) reported. Park officials thought they were litter, not part of a city initiative.

Austin Public Health Director Shannon Jones said staff members put the unknown number of bags containing condoms, lube and safe sex information in the park last month and replenished them Wednesday. However, Jones didn't know about the initiative within his department until Friday morning, after Austin's KXAN-TV reported on the story. He told newspaper that there is a departmental vetting process for such initiatives and "we have reminded our staff of that."

Jones defended promoting safe sex, saying: "The rates of HIV in our community are high. We need to use traditional and nontraditional efforts to reduce the spread of disease."

Austin Parks and Recreation Department Director Sara Hensley, expressed more skepticism.

"Plastic bags, of course, can fall into the creek and hurt critters," she said. "Then we found out it was an effort to educate the public about safe sex, which we absolutely support, but I'm not sure hanging something from a tree is the best way to get the message across."

Hensley said officials will decide whether that kind of action is appropriate, considering city parks "are open to everyone, including young children."

State data shows 53 people were diagnosed with HIV in Austin in the first three months of 2016. Last year, 288 people were diagnosed in Travis County, which includes Austin.

KXAN credited the program to Akesha Johnson-Smothers, a city program manager for HIV prevention. Jones said there would be an investigation into vetting and communication surrounding the condom program and that disciplinary action was possible.

Robert Meadows, president of the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association, laughed when informed of the program, but said association rules meant he couldn't offer a public opinion. He said Walnut Creek Park's public restrooms have long been known as a meeting place for sex.

Information from: Austin American-Statesman, http://www.statesman.com

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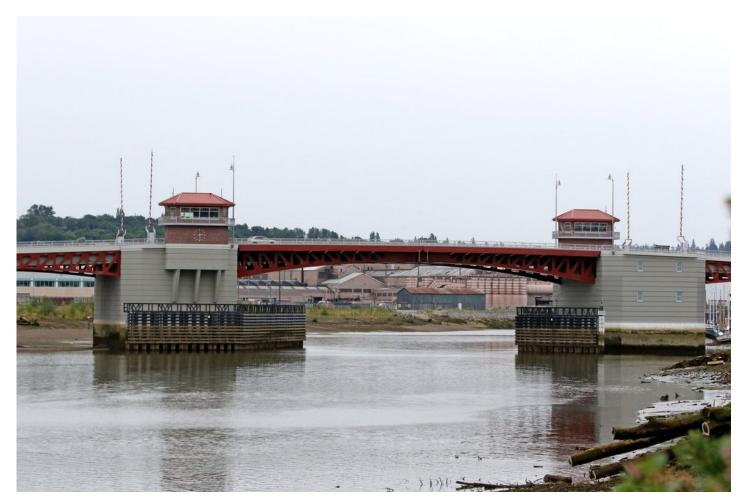




Local News

Bird drops salmon on Seattle power lines, knocks out power

Originally published December 15, 2016 at 10:00 am Updated December 15, 2016 at 4:32 pm



Seattle City Light says a bird, likely hunting over the Duwamish River, seen here near the South Park Bridge, dropped the fish on a power line. (Greg Gilbert / The Seattle Times)

More than 170 utility customers lost power when a fish fell on power lines.

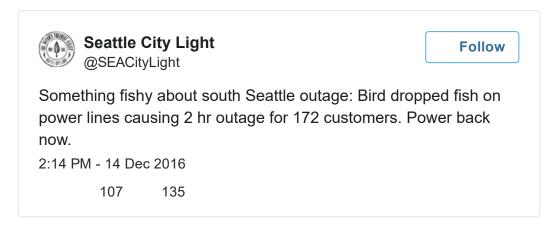


Update at 12 p.m.: The fish is believed to have been a salmon, according to Seattle City Light. A witness apparently saw the fish fall from a bird and hit the power lines.

It was quite the fish fry.

South Seattle customers lost power for more than two hours after a flying (perhaps flopping) fish fell on power lines near the Duwamish River in South Park.

Ospreys and eagles frequently hunt in the area, said Connie McDougall, a Seattle City Light spokeswoman. The fish likely wriggled its way out of becoming lunch Wednesday afternoon, but met a different, unfortunate end.



A witness saw it fall from the sky and hit the power lines in the 1000 block of South Elmgrove Street, McDougall said. In all, 172 customers were affected.

Crews got out there almost immediately and there was ... an electrocuted fish" on the ground below. The crew identified the fish as a salmon.

Birds often cause power outages, and City Light expends effort protecting its infrastructure from aerial incursions.

In 2015, 162 birds caused outages and two bald eagles were killed.

A fish tale is a new twist, McDougall said.

"I've been at City Light 15 or 16 years. We've had a couple encounters with raccoons and certainly birds," McDougall said. "I've never heard of a fish before."

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Camels issued LICENCE PLATES in Iran after increase in road accidents

dailymail.co.uk 12:02 EST, 7 December 2016 |

Camels will be issued with licence plates in Iran in a bit to curb road traffic accidents.

Nearly 100,000 of the animals have already got their personal registration numbers and 35,000 more are to be issued during the first phase of the scheme.

Officials have pointed to the number of camels on the roads of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing damages, accidents and losses to residents as the reason for the licence plate plan.

Camels will be issued with licence plates in Iran in a bit to curb road traffic accidents

Officials have pointed to the number of camels in the roads of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing damages, accidents and losses to residents

Mohammad-Sharif Khaleqinia, the secretary of Iranian Central Task Force to Combat the Smuggling of Commodities and Currency in Sistan and Baluchestan Province told IRNA: 'We are going to give identity cards to 35,000 camels during the first phase of issuing licence plates for them.'

'And 95,000 animals have been given licence plates since the beginning of the new Iranian year.

When the camels are involved in car accidents in the country, there is no way of tracing them.

The authorities want to introduce the number plates so that owners can contacted if their camel is involved in an incident.

Another aim of the scheme, according to IFP News, is to give Iranians more or a feel of responsibility to the animals in a bid to resolve the issues surrounding trafficking in the country.

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Canadians Puzzled by Warning That Snow Globes May Cause Cancer

loweringthebar.net



Luckily they are difficult to insert in sensitive areas (photo: CTV News)

December 14, 2016

Canadians shopping at Lowe's recently were surprised to learn that the decorative snow globes they were holding might trigger an allergic skin reaction, or even cause cancer. Or so said the warning labels.

"Is it the paint?" one shopper wondered, apparently aloud and where a reporter could hear him. "Is it the liquid? Is it all of the

above? Which cancer is it? [I]t brings up so many questions" Luckily, however, none of those questions need to be answered, because—despite what the TSA apparently once believed—snow globes pose almost no risk at all.

According to the BBC, the snow globe was invented in 1900 by an Austrian, Erwin Perzy. The BBC was wrong, though, because snow globes were already around by the time of the Paris Universal Exposition in 1878. So although Perzy may have come up with it independently, a different genius developed snow-globe technology first. Perzy did start a company to make the things, though, and his descendants still run it today, turning out about 200,000 *schneekugel* every year. They made the one in *Citizen Kane*, in fact. Yes, that one broke, but that was Kane's fault. Secure your globe before you croak, like any responsible person would, and this won't be an issue.

And the labels now perplexing Canadians don't say anything about direct physical risks like glass shards anyway; they're warning about some kind of chemical exposure. According to Lowe's, while the glass in its globes does contain some lead, the level isn't high enough to be toxic. It isn't clear that lead causes cancer anyway, apparently.

What about the liquid inside? Well, that could conceivably be trouble. It's apparently mostly water, but not enough to kill you unless you have a really tiny head. But at least some manufacturers add chemicals to thicken the water and so that the water won't freeze during transit, and that could be dangerous to children, pets, TSA agents, or anyone else not smart enough to avoid drinking snow-globe water. But again, this doesn't involve any risk of cancer, as far as I can tell.

So how to explain the presence of a cancer warning on Canadian snow-globes? Well, the reason turns out to be simple and semi-understandable—it's California's fault:

Lowe's Canada spokesperson Valerie Gonzalo told CTV Calgary the labels are there to satisfy a California law that requires manufacturers to put warnings on products containing any of 800 chemicals that state deems carcinogenic, even if they're found at safe levels.

Ah yes—that would be Proposition 65, a California law that requires warnings to be posted anywhere chemicals may be found that California believes may cause cancer or birth defects. (Disclosure: my firm defends Prop 65 cases occasionally.) The state keeps a list of these chemicals, of course. The first list, created in 1987, had 29 chemicals on it. How many are on it now? "Approximately 800," according to the relevant state agency (which apparently isn't sure? I counted 828 here). Now, lots of these are really nasty—pesticides, heavy metals, etc. It was news to me that "salted fish, Chinese style" is dangerous, but maybe so. It's on the list, anyway. But even assuming everything on the list is in fact super-deadly, Prop 65 does not ban any of these things or even limit the allowable levels. It only requires a warning.

This is a truly odd approach for at least a few of the things on the list. For example, "certain combined therapy for lymphomas" and many other chemotherapy drugs are on the list. It's true some of these can raise the risk of cancer. But since you aren't taking them unless you've already *got* cancer, I'm not sure what good the warning is supposed to do. Also on the list: alcohol, cocaine, and marijuana smoke. **ALERT:** none of that is good for you. Engine exhaust is also on the list. It's also everywhere, so are they supposed to put a warning on the outdoors?

This is the main problem with Prop 65: there are 800 or so chemicals on the list, many of them very common, and if a business doesn't have a warning posted, it's likely to get sued (that's how the law is enforced). And because there's no penalty for posting a warning that isn't necessary, the safest thing is to post one. This means the warnings are everywhere in California, and I mean *everywhere*. See, e.g., "Stupid Warning Shows Up on Leprechaun Hat" (Mar. 20, 2014). And that in turn means nobody in California pays any attention at all. Except lawyers looking for somebody to sue.

Why are the California warnings on Canadian snow-globes? Either it was just a mistake, or the manufacturer decided it was easier to stick the warnings on all the globes instead of just those going to California. (California is such a giant market, it's easy for us to bring others down to our level this way.) The good news, though, is that there's almost no chance your snow globe will give you cancer. And no, we don't represent snow-globe manufacturers, as far as I know.

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Canadians warned about car-licking moose - BBC News

bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

15 December 2016

Officials in western Canada are warning motorists not to interact with moose if they find the animals licking salt off their cars.

An alert issued by the province of Alberta's government says that moose are approaching vehicles in car parks near two trails in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, and warns people not to try to push the animals away while on foot.

It advises that the recommended "moose viewing distance" is 30m (100ft), and any car-licking creatures should be deterred by either sounding a horn or using a remote door alarm instead. As CBC news points out, adult moose can weigh more than 1,000lb (453kg), so shoving one is unlikely to be effective. The animals can become aggressive and charge people or vehicles if they feel threatened.

Dr Doug Whiteside from Calgary Zoo tells Global News that moose and other wildlife ordinarily get all the salt they need in their diets. "If there is no natural source of salt available they will find an alternate source, like the salt from the roads on vehicles," he says.

The Alberta warning is in place until further notice, and officials are asking people to report any "aggressive moose encounters" immediately.

Image copyright Alberta Government/Alberta Parks

Cavemen were more vegetarian than we thought

by Jaime Bender | Tuesday, December 6, 2016

fromthegrapevine.com

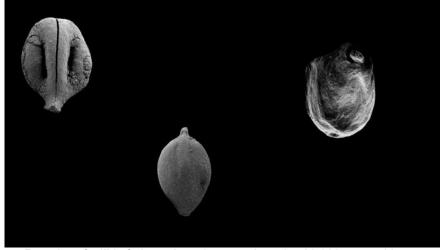


Cavemen were more vegetarian than we thought

Scientists discover that prehistoric man knew how to make a meal with nutritious food in plants, not just animals.

by Jaime Bender Tuesday, December 6, 2016

From the Grapevine



Remains of edible fruits and seeds approximately 780,000 years old were discovered in the northern Jordan Valley. (Photo: Yaakov Langsam)

When you hear the word "paleo," what comes to mind?

For most of us, it's things like protein, meat, fish, hunting and cavemen. But recently, scientists have introduced another discovery to the traditionally carnivorous prehistoric lexicon: early hominids, or what we consider the human family's earliest ancestors, also knew their way around a vegetable or two.

During recent archaeological excavations in Israel's Hula Valley, scientists from Hebrew University and

Bar Ilan University found evidence of tiny ancient botanicals – specifically, 55 species of edible plants, including seeds, fruits, nuts, leaves, stems, roots and tubers.

"Our results change previous notions of [the] paleo diet and shed light on hominin abilities to adjust to new environments and exploit different flora, facilitating population diffusion, survival, and colonization beyond Africa," the researchers wrote in their report, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on Dec. 5.

Nuts, seeds and edible plants from the Mediterranean region were a key part of the paleo diet, researchers found. (Photo: Erez Kaganovitz)

Among the findings was a tiny (about 1 millimeter) grape pip, thought to have been left on the ground some 780,000 years ago, discovered in an old Stone Age site in Israel on the shoreline of Lake Hula, dating back to the Acheulian culture. The plants indicate a rich vegetarian diet enjoyed by our human ancestors that supplemented their protein-rich hunting-and-gathering lifestyle.

"This region is known for the wealth of plants, but what surprised us were the sources of plant food coming from the lake. We found more than 10 species that existed here in prehistoric times but no longer today, such as two types of water nuts, from which seven were edible," Dr. Yoel Melamed, of the Faculty of Life Sciences at Bar Ilan University, said in a statement.



So if your interest in the paleo diet is now piqued, here's a basic tip to get you started: If a caveman could eat it, so can you. (Hint: They didn't eat pasta and candy bars. Sorry.)

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Moshe and fruit and nuts

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Christmas trees for free after Ohio donor buys the lot

yahoo.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — An anonymous donor has given people who couldn't afford a Christmas tree a chance to take one home after paying for all the remaining trees on a lot at a Catholic elementary school in Columbus.

The Columbus Dispatch reports (http://bit.ly/2hj5hDl) a man showed up Monday afternoon and paid for dozens of trees priced at \$40 and \$50. People cleared the lot Tuesday morning after the principal of St. Mary School in the German Village neighborhood posted on Facebook on Monday night that the trees were free to anyone in need.

Proceeds from the annual tree sale are split between two charity groups, including one that provides the school with supplies and other financial help.

St. Mary principal Kayla Walton says the donor provided a "beautiful expression" of the Christmas spirit.

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Clash as teenagers face off against Krampus



The Local 8 December 2016 09:43 CET+01:00

Things got a little more exciting than usual at the annual Krampus parade in the small town of St. Johann in Pongau when a group of teenagers attacked the demonic mountain spirits.

According to a report in the Oesterreich daily, a group of young Turkish teens were provoked by the boisterous display of the Krampus performers, and physically attacked them

during a procession near Salzburg on Tuesday night.

The parade consisted of around 40 Krampus-costumed locals, many of whom had already thoroughly warmed themselves with a few drinks, as is traditional.

Krampus is part of a Christmas tradition at this time in Austria and parts of southern Germany, which sees a parade of masked young men, dancing through the street dragging chains and giant metal sleds with fire and noise-makers.

The Krampus is often known to punish onlookers, using long thin sticks to beat people around the legs, especially if they're suspected of being naughty.

Usually, St. Nikolas is on hand to keep the lively mountain spirits in line, but on this occasion, it wasn't enough, so police had to intervene with pepper spray.

At least one 15-year-old Turkish youth was arrested after attacking a Krampus with his fists. Friends of his attempted to intervene in the arrest, however police quickly gained control, and made additional arrests.

Back in 2014, a woman was hospitalized after being attacked by a masked attacker dressed as Krampus.

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Colombia jet crash club fined £25k for missing last fixture of season

10:46 EST, 12 December 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

The Brazilian football club whose squad was wiped out in a Colombian plane crash has been fined £25,000 for missing their final match of the season, it has been claimed.

Nineteen players from Chapecoense were among the 71 killed when their plane crashed down on its way from Santa Cruz, Bolivia to Medellin, Colombia last month.

The team were on their way to compete in the first leg of the Copa Sudamericana final against Atletico Nacional.

Scroll down for video

The Brazilian football club whose squad was wiped out in a Colombian plane crash has been fined £25,000 for missing their final match of the season, it has emerged

Nineteen players from Chapecoense were among the 71 killed when their plane crashed down on its way from Santa Cruz, Bolivia to Medellin, Colombia last month

According to the Mirror, the club has now been fined about £25,000 for failing to fulfil their final fixture of the season - a game against league rivals Atletico Mineiro.

Although the final round of matches in the Brazilian championship was due to have been played on December 1, it was agreed that the game against Mineiro would not be played in the wake of the tragedy.

But the Superior Court of Justice is said to have decided to punish both clubs for not playing the fixture as planned.

Just six people survived the crash including players Alan Ruschel, Follmann and Neto. The other survivors were a journalist and two members of the flight crew.

The journalist, Brazilian radio star Rafael Henzel has since claimed the pilot never told passengers to fasten their seatbelt before the aircraft smashed into a hillside.

He spoke with Fantastico programme on Sunday night from Colombia, where he is recovering.

'At no point did someone from the cabin or the crew tell us, 'Put on your seatbelts," said Henzel. 'We just kept flying without any idea of what was about to happen.'

Investigations have been launched in Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia. Colombian authorities have said they believe a lack of fuel caused the crash.

The team were on their way to compete in the first leg of the Copa Sudamericana final against Atletico Nacional

Henzel said that toward the end of the flight, passengers around him began asking how long it would be before they landed.

'Ten minutes,' was the response from the crew, he said. 'Then suddenly, the lights went off and the engines went off.'

At that point, everyone rushed back to their seats and fastened their seatbelts, said Henzel. Then the plane crashed into a hillside.

Henzel said when he awoke, there were emergency workers around him and he was in immense pain from what turned out to be seven broken ribs. He called out to the colleagues who had been sitting on each side of him, but they had died.

He said he believed he survived thanks to a miracle and the good fortune to wake up just as emergency workers passed by.

Henzel said he was sickened to learn the cause of the accident was likely a lack of fuel.

'People died because of a lack of judgment,' he said. 'That is revolting.'

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Court order can't stop stray golf balls from hitting home

yahoo.com

EASTON, Pa. (AP) — A couple who live next to a Pennsylvania golf course says errant balls are still hitting their property despite a previous court order.

The (Allentown) Morning Call (http://bit.ly/2gEvAzC) says Jerzy and Halina Wisniewski returned to Northampton County court Wednesday with 50-some golf balls they say came from the Morgan Hill Golf Course since October.

That's when the couple got a court injunction, which prompted the course to relocate some tees to keep golfers from hooking balls onto the couple's property.

The couple's attorney says the course should have done more to stop the balls.

But course attorney Erv McLain says thick woods already separate the course from the property and suspects the couple has gathered the balls in hopes the course will buy them out.

The judge will rule after both sides submit written arguments.

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Crowds flock to see 'monster' at Auckland's Muriwai beach

stuff JACKSON THOMAS

Last updated 19:34, December 12 2016



Rani Timoti Driftwood at Muriwai Beach in Auckland.



Rani Timoti Closeup of driftwood barnacles on Muriwai Beach, Auckland.



JACKSON THOMAS Pallets on Muriwai Beach with "gooseneck barnacles".

Members of the public flocked to Muriwai Beach on Monday, cameras in hand, trying to catch a glimpse of the "Muriwai Monster".

Beach-goer Melissa Doubleday first discovered the barnacled drift wood on Saturday, and posted the pictures on Facebook.

The images generated a lot of online traffic, with people both confused and intrigued by the alien-looking object.

Muriwai resident Rani Timoti said in all her years wandering the beach, she has never seen anything like it.

"This is the biggest one I've seen. It's got a putrid smell when you're down wind and when you look closely, it looks like wiggling worms," she said.

The New Zealand Marine Sciences Society said they were "almost positive from looking at the images" that it was a piece of driftwood covered in what are known as gooseneck barnacles.

Gooseneck barnacles are filter-feeding crustaceans that live attached to hard surfaces of rock or driftwood.

The "Muriwai monster" is located roughly 5km down the beach from the Muriwai Creek end.

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Rare set of Cruikshank Oliver Twist etchings from the 1800s discovered

dailymail.co.uk

Consider yourself well coloured in! Rare set of Cruikshank Oliver Twist etchings which were painstakingly hand watercoloured by an unknown artist in the 1880s have been discovered

- 22 plates in incredibly good condition were a part of a set of 26
- They picture hand-coloured paintings depicting scenes from Oliver Twist
- They are being sold at a pre-sale estimate of £3,000

By Anna Hopkins For Mailonline

An extremely rare set of hand coloured etchings that brought to vivid life the story of Oliver Twist in the 1880s have been discovered.

The 22 black and white etchings were produced by David Cruikshank, who illustrated Charles Dickens' famous story about an orphaned street urchin that was first published in 1838.

Fifty years later an unknown artist was commissioned to painstakingly go over the etchings by hand using water colour paint for a very limited edition run of them.



Pictured, The Artful Dodger awaits another victim. Fifty years after the book's publication an unknown artist was commissioned to painstakingly go over the etchings by hand using water colour paint for a very limited edition run of the illustrations

It would have been a very time-consuming and expensive process and it is believed they were for wealthy Dickens' connoisseurs. It wasn't until 1895 that Oliver Twist was printed using colour plates for the first time.

The 22 hand-coloured plates contain famous scenes from the novel, including the one of Oliver in a workhouse offering up an empty bowl before uttering the words 'please sir, can I have some more?'

There is also the image of a condemned Fagin in his cell before he is hanged.



The process would have been extremely expensive and time consuming - here a condemned Fagin sits in his jail cell

 New 'Fagin's Law' to crack down on adults recruiting kids... The lost tribes: Remarkable 100-year-old photos provide... Is that Yoda or a garden gnome? Original design of Jedi...

The 22 plates, that measure 10 inches by 7 inches, would have been part of a full set of 26 but four are missing. They are in remarkably good condition and show no signs of fading so it is unlikely they have been hung on a wall for any length of time.

They are owned by a private collector who has had them for many years but little is known about their provenance.

They are being sold by auctioneers Sotheby's with a pre-sale estimate of £3,000.

Evil Bill Sykes scales a roof in this etching, which are in remarkably good condition indicating that they were likely not hung on a wall



Dr Philip Etherington, a specialist in books and manuscripts at Sotheby's, said: 'We know that in 1866 Cruikshank did some colour versions of Oliver Twist illustrations, these were a private commission for a friend.

'Cruikshank's illustrations of Oliver Twist are relatively well known and there are various different issues of them and reprinted many times over the years.

'But these 1880s etchings were printed and then hand coloured on top of that.



Oliver is pictured here with his adopted mother. The set has an estimated pre-sale value of £3,000 and will be sold by Sotheby's on Tuesday

'It would not have been a cheap thing to get a set of etchings produced on a set of leaves and then go to the trouble and expense to find somebody who would painstakingly hand colour them and exquisite detail.

'So these plates are really very lovely and very special and very rare.

'None of them are faded which would be a tell-tale sign of them being hung on a wall for

many years.

'The illustrations were used in an 1895 standard edition of Oliver Twist.

'But you can quickly tell the difference between a printed version and a hand-coloured version which has additional depth to it.'

The plates are being sold in London tomorrow.

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'Curvy' squirrel Olivio rescued from Munich manhole, then eats a lot - BBC News

bbc.com





Olivio's backside was too large to get through the manhole

Image copyrightDPA

A red squirrel who got stuck halfway through a manhole cover thanks to his curvy hips is recovering after a lengthy rescue operation in Munich.

Initial attempts to free the animal by slathering him in olive oil failed, with his huge behind preventing him from squeezing his way out.

He was finally freed after animal rescue services lifted off the cover and eased his head through the hole.

Locals have nicknamed the squirrel "Olivio" after his oily encounter.

After the ordeal on Friday, an exhausted Olivio was wrapped in a warm towel and fed glucose, local media report.

Man rescued from inside public toilet

Squirrel causes major power cut

Staff at a local animal shelter say Olivio is recovering well and has now moved on to a diet of Christmas nuts.

"He was almost dead," Sabine Gallenberger from the Squirrel Protection Association told German media.

"Now he is eating a lot and sleeps all the time."

The BBC was unable to verify the size of Olivio's behind.

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Dad spends £30k on surgery to look like Marvel Nazi supervillain Red

By Scarlet Howes 16:22, 8 DEC 2016 Updated 19:47, 8 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

A dad-of-one has gone to extreme lengths to transform himself into Captain America's nemesis the Nazi supervillain Red Skull.

Henry Rodriguez, from Caracas, Venezuela, splashed out £30,000 on multiple procedures in a bid to turn himself into the Marvel comic book madman.

Images show the 37-year-old's journey as he first gets his eyes tattooed black, has implants inserted into his head and then undergoes a painful operation to have part of his nose removed.

Rodriguez, who now calls himself Red Skull, has also inked his face with red and black and it's unlikely he will stop the body modifications any time soon.







But despite his scary

appearance, Henry insists he is still a loving husband and dad to three-year-old son, Aaron.

It's clear from the photos that the family still lead a normal life, with Henry taking Aaron out for meals, carrying him on his shoulders and reading to him in bed.



THIS AFFECTIONATE father-of-one looks like Henry Rodriguez and his he stepped straight out of the page of a comic book after spending £30K to transform into the fictional Nazi supervillain Red Skull



son Aaron

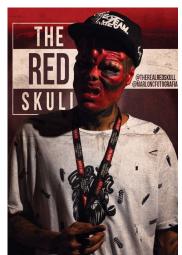


Stunning pictures show Henry Rodriguez who has undergone multiple modifications documented online to

Speaking of his surgery, Henry's friend Pablo

have recently completed his look as the personification of his idol Red Skull

Hernandez, said: "He has loved comic books since he was a kid and always dreamed of being Red Skull, but never got round to doing it.









"Then he met up with a brilliant surgeon who specialises in extreme body modifications and just knew that this was his opportunity."

Red Skull was first introduced into the Marvel comic book series in 1947 as the Nazi arch-enemy to Captain America.





The supervillain has also made a more recent appearance in the 2011 movie Captain America: The First Avenger which starred Hugo Weaving as Red Skull and Chris Evans as the hero.

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bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

15 December 2016



Image copyrightAFP

A North Korean-run news website claims that a defector group is planning to use explosive-laden drones to blow up statues of its former leaders.

According to a report on the Uriminzokkiri propaganda website, the group - which it termed "human scum" - had already conducted test flights from the Chinese border area in their attempts to blow up statues of Kim Ilsung and Kim Jong-il in one northern city. It claimed that the plan was approved by South Korean president

Park Geun-hye in an attempt to divert attention away from the corruption scandal which saw her impeached last week, South Korea's Yonhap news agency says.

"We will never forgive anyone who desecrates our leaders, and will ruthlessly end the lives of those who take part in such activities, even if we have to chase them all around the globe," the North Korean report said.

Speaking to news and analysis website NK News, Park Sang-hak representing the Fighters for Free North Korea defectors' group, claimed that they were behind the drone incursion. "It was our top-secret operation, I have no idea how the North found out it was us," he said. Park told NK News that the test flight successfully reached the statues at Hyesan, a city on North Korea's border with China, and that they would blow them up "next time the North conducts another nuclear test, threatens the South with missile launches or attacks our South Korean soldiers."

The plan may be unrealistic according to one South Korean explosives expert, who told NK News that a drone would not be able to carry a charge large enough to demolish a metal statue.

Even an unsuccessful attack would be certain to provoke dangerous tensions between Seoul and Pyongyang. The personality cult surrounding the Kim family is such that statues and portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il are venerated with almost religious fervour, and destroying a statue would be - in the words of Uriminzokkiri - an attack on "the highest dignity" of North Korea.

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Firefighters put on protective clothing to catch world's deadliest spider

metro.co.uk

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 7:26 am



A firefighter in protective clothing approaches the deadly spider (Picture: CEN)

This is pretty much the only way you should approach this spider.

Ten firefighters were called out to help catch a Brazilian wandering spider after it was found in a shipping container.

Police sealed off the area after customs officials in Bremerhaven.

north west Germany, called them to say they had found the deadly arachnid during a routine customs check.

Because the spider's bite can cause a fatal allergic shock, the firefighters had to wear chemical protective suits to open the shaft and flood the container with carbon dioxide from a fire extinguisher.



The spider did not survive (Picture: CEN)

The spider did not survive the carbon dioxide, and firefighters were able to safely retrieve the dead arachnid from the container afterwards.

Brazilian wandering spiders appear in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's most venomous spider.

They state that although the Brazilian wandering spider venom is the most toxic, anti venoms that are available are very effective, and therefore there are relatively few bite fatalities.

The spiders, often called banana spiders as well, are mainly found in tropical South America, with one species found in Central America. The spiders in the genus can grow to have a leg span of almost 6ins.

The Brazilian wandering spider is officially the most venemous on the planet (Picture: CEN)

How deadly is it?



The Brazilian Wandering Spider's venom will kill in minute amounts, causing a lingering death from paralysis, with victims often sporting erections caused by the toxin as they die in agony.

Also known as the banana spider, the creature is named in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's most venomous, and is so big it lives on mice and crickets.

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Florida woman tracks nude photos on son's cellphone to NC youth pastor, officials say

wftv.com

WFTV Orlando



Updated: Dec 8, 2016 - 4:30 PM



Tyler Sinkus Smither (Undated photo: Harbor United Methodist Church website)

WILMINGTON, N.C. - A
Florida woman who found
nude photos of an adult male
on her son's cellphone was
traced the sender's telephone
number to a New Hanover
County youth pastor,
according to court records.

Tyler Sinkus Smither, 30, the youth pastor at Harbor United Methodist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, is now facing two counts of indecent liberties with a child.

According to an affidavit, the Florida boy's mother had a parental control option on her 11-year-old son's cellphone.

She was notified by Verizon that someone at an unknown number was contacting her child. When she searched the number on Facebook, she found it linked to Smither.

He was arrested on Dec. 2, the affidavit said.

In a sermon two days later, Harbor UMC pastor Russ Nanney addressed the situation, referring to Smither but never mentioning him by name.

"I hope that, as my former preaching professor used to say, that we will one day grant our former youth minister that long look of mercy," he said. "I'm not suggesting this is the easy thing to do, nor am I suggesting that we can do this today. But I hope one day, as a church, we can do that."

Calling Smither intelligent and gifted, Nanney lamented the charges he was facing.

"(He is) a man who was loved, a man who we trusted, a man with whom we share memories and laughter with, but a man who," he said, taking a long pause, "fell."

Nanney said it is hard to know how to react, because numbness was the only thing he was able to feel for the last few days.

"I have yet to process this," he said. "I have processed it in my head, but not in my heart."

Jail records show that Smither was released on a \$100,000 bond after his arrest.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

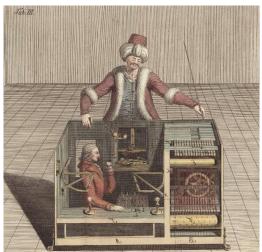
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The PUBLIC DOMAIN REVIEW

A project of the Open Knowledge Foundation

Defecating ducks, talking busts, and mechanised Christs — Jessica Riskin on the wonderful history of automata, machines built to mimic the processes of intelligent life.



Coloured engraving from Joseph Racknitz's 1789 pamphlet which attempted to reveal the secret workings of William Kempelen's alleged chess-playing automaton "The Turk" -

How old are the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence? Many might trace their origins to the mid-twentieth century, and the work of people such as Alan Turing, who wrote about the possibility of machine intelligence in the '40s and '50s, or the MIT engineer Norbert Wiener, a founder of cybernetics. But these fields have prehistories — traditions of machines that imitate living and intelligent processes - stretching back centuries and, depending how you count, even millennia.

The word "robot" made its first appearance in a 1920 play by the Czech writer Karel Čapek entitled R.U.R., for Rossum's Universal Robots. Deriving his neologism from the Czech word "robota," meaning "drudgery" or "servitude," Čapek used "robot" to refer to a race of artificial humans who replace human workers in a futurist dystopia. (In fact, the artificial humans in the play are more like clones than what we would consider robots, grown in vats rather than built from parts.)

There was, however, an earlier word for artificial humans and animals, "automaton", stemming from Greek roots meaning "self-moving". This etymology was in keeping with Aristotle's definition of living beings as those things that could move themselves at will. Self-moving machines were inanimate objects that seemed to borrow the defining feature of living creatures: self-motion. The firstcentury-AD engineer Hero of Alexandria described lots of automata. Many

involved elaborate networks of siphons that activated various actions as the water passed through them, especially figures of birds drinking, fluttering, and chirping.

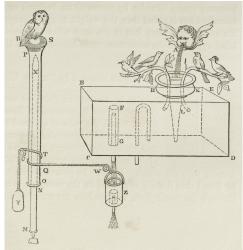


Illustration from an 1851 English edition of Hero's Pneumatica, in which he describes machines working on air, steam or water pressure — Source.

The siphon would have had a particular attraction to the ancient automaton-maker, in that it makes water travel upward, counter to what it would otherwise do. According to Aristotle, while living things moved themselves at will, inanimate things moved according to their natures: heavy things, made of earth or water, descended, while light things, made of air or fire, ascended. A siphon, by allowing water to ascend, appeared to violate Aristotle's principle, and it also tends to work intermittently, and so further creating the illusion of wilful behavior.

Waterworks, including but not limited to ones using siphons, were probably the most important category of automata in antiquity and the middle ages. Flowing water conveyed motion to a figure or set of figures by means of levers or pulleys or tripping mechanisms of various sorts. A late twelfth-century example by an Arabic automatonmaker named Al-Jazari is a peacock fountain for hand-washing, in which flowing water triggers little figures to offer the washer first a dish of perfumed soap powder, then a hand towel.

Such hydraulic automata became ubiquitous on the grounds of palaces and wealthy estates. So-called "frolicsome engines" were to be found as early as the late thirteenth century at the French chateau of Hesdin, the account books of which mention mechanical monkeys, "an elephant and a he-goat".1 Over the next two centuries, the

chateau collection expanded to include: "3 personnages that spout water and wet people at will"; a "machine for wetting ladies when they step on it"; an "engien [sic] which, when its knobs are touched, strikes in the face those who are underneath and covers them with black or white [flour or coal dust]"; a "window where, when people wish to open it, a personage in front of it wets people and closes the window again in spite of them"; a "lectern on which there is a book of ballades, and, when they try to read it, people are all covered with black, and, as soon as they look inside, they are all wet with water"; a "mirror where people are sent to look at themselves when they are besmirched, and, when they look into it, they are once more all covered with flour, and all whitened", and so on, and so on.2

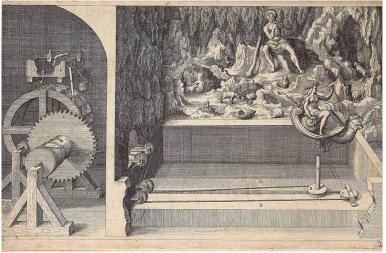
By the time the French essayist and diarist Michel de Montaigne went traveling through Europe in 1580-81, hydraulic automata had grown so commonplace that he grew bored, though he continued dutifully to record them in his travel diary. At one palace, for



Illustration of the peacock fountain, from a 14th-century edition of Al-Jazari's Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices - Source .

example, he saw sprays of water from "brass jets" activated by springs. "While the ladies are busy watching the fish play, you have only to release some spring: immediately all these jets spurt out thin, hard streams of water to the height of a man's head, and fill the petticoats and thighs of the ladies with this coolness".3

Twenty years later, the French King Henri IV hired the Italian engineer Tomaso Francini to build him some waterworks for the royal palace at Saint Germain en Laye. Francini built hydraulic grottoes devoted to the Greek pantheon and their adventures: Mercury played a trumpet and Orpheus his lyre; Perseus freed Andromeda from her dragon. There were automaton blacksmiths, weavers, millers, carpenters, knife-grinders, fishermen and farriers conducting the obligatory watery attacks on spectators.



Not actually one of Francini's grottoes but rather a depiction of a similar creation designed by a contemporary French hydraulic engineer Salomon de Caus, published in his 1615 work Les raisons des forces mouvantes — Source

Even more than in royal gardens and on noble estates, medieval and early Renaissance automata appeared in churches and cathedrals. Automaton Christs muttering, blinking, grimacing on the Cross — were especially popular. A mechanical Christ on a crucifix. known as the Rood of Grace, attracted pilgrims to Boxley Abbey in Kent during the fifteenth century. This Jesus "was made

to move the eyes and lipps by stringes of haire". The Rood could move its hands and feet, nod its head, roll its eyes, and show "a well contented or displeased minde: byting the lippe, and gathering a frowning, forward, and disdainful face, when it would pretend offence: and shewing a most milde, amiable, and smyling cheere and countenaunce, when it woulde seeme to be well pleased".4

Mechanical devils were also to be found. Poised in sacristies, they made horrible faces, howled and stuck out their tongues. The Satan-machines rolled their eyes and flailed their arms and wings; some even had moveable horns and crowns.

The Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi even mechanized Paradise itself: "a Heaven full of living and moving figures could be seen as well as countless lights, flashing on and off like lightning".5 While elsewhere, elaborately engineered hells rumbled with thunder and flashed with lightning, spewing forth writhing automaton serpents and dragons.



A mechanised creature, half-human halfserpent, from Johannes de Fontana's 15thcentury manuscript Belli Corum instrumentorum liber cum figuris - Source

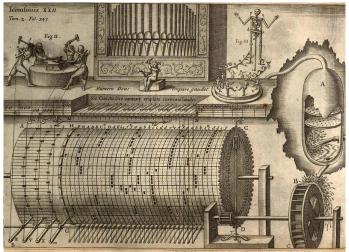
These machines helped inspire the idea that perhaps automata accomplished something deeper than merely entertaining tricks: perhaps they genuinely modeled the workings of nature. The French philosopher René Descartes made this case powerfully during the 1640s, arguing that the entire world, including living bodies, was essentially machinery composed of moving parts and could be understood in just the way a clockmaker understands a clock. His work was foundational to modern science in general, and to modern physiology in particular. In developing his mechanist model of science, Descartes invoked the lifelike machines all around him. Indeed, he lived for a time in Saint Germain en Laye and almost certainly visited the hydraulic grottoes of Henri IV, which he described in detail.

With the sixteenth-century advent of the pinned cylinder — a barrel with pins or bars sticking out, such as in a music box — even more complex lifelike machines were possible. Around this time, a new word also arose to describe human-like machines in particular: "android," derived from Greek roots meaning "manlike." This was the coinage of Gabriel Naudé, French physician and librarian, and personal doctor to none other than the automaton-loving Louis XIII.6

Pinned cylinders were the programming devices in automata and automatic organs from around 1600. In 1650, the German polymath Athanasius Kircher offered an early design of a hydraulic organ with automata, governed by a pinned cylinder and including a dancing skeleton.

Of course, it's an anachronism to call sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pinned cylinders "programming" devices. To be sure, there is a continuous line of development from these pinned

cylinders to the punch cards used in nineteenth-century automatic looms (which automated the weaving of patterned fabrics), to the punch cards used in early computers, to a silicon chip. The designers of the automatic loom used automata and automatic musical



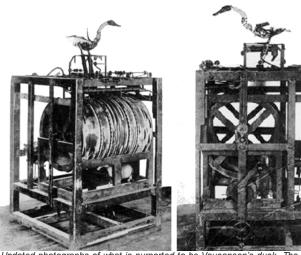
Kircher's fanciful design for a hydraulic organ, complete with dancing skeleton, featured in his Musurgia Universalis (1650) — Source .

instruments as their model; then Charles Babbage — the English mathematician who designed the first mechanical computers during the 1830s, the Analytical and Difference Engines — in turn used the automatic loom as his model. Indeed, one might consider a pinned cylinder to be a sequence of pins and spaces, just as a punch card is a sequence of holes and spaces, or zeroes and ones. Though it is important to remember that neither Babbage nor the designers of the automatic loom nor the automaton-makers thought of these devices in terms of programming or information, concepts which did not exist until the mid-twentieth century. For example, ideas about the division of labor inspired the Industrial-Revolution-era automatic looms as well as Babbage's calculating engines — they were machines intended primarily to separate mindless from intelligent forms of work.

With pinned cylinders, beginning in the early part of the eighteenth century, people began to design automata that actually enacted the tasks they appeared to perform. The first simulative automata were designed in the 1730s by a Frenchman named Jacques

Vaucanson, and quickly became the talk of Europe. Two were musicians, a "Piper" and a "Flutist". The flutist had lips that flexed in four directions, delicate jointed fingers, and lungs made of bellows that gave three different blowing pressures. It was the first automaton musician actually to play an instrument, rather than being a music box with a decorative figure. It played a real flute: you could even bring it your own.

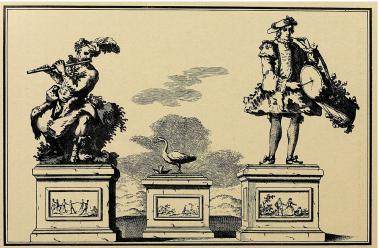
Vaucanson's third automaton was the notorious "Defecating Duck". While it flapped its wings and cavorted duckishly, its main attraction was that it swallowed bits of corn or grain and excreted them at the other end in a changed form. (This part of the act was a fake: the corn that went in the front remained hidden for surreptitious removal, while the rear end was pre-loaded.)



Undated photographs of what is purported to be Vaucanson's duck. The images seem to fit with Goethe's description of seeing it in 1805, "without feathers skeleton" - Source

Although none of Vaucanson's automata survive, their cousins do. Among these are three androids designed in the 1770s by a Swiss clockmaking family named Jaquet-Droz: a lady "Musician" and two little boys, a "Writer" and a "Draughtsman". The "Writer" can be arranged to write any message of up to forty characters; the "Draughtsman" sketches four pictures in charcoal; and the "Musician" plays several airs on a harpsichord. The trio is eerily lifelike, and still hold court in Neuchatel, Switzerland. Their eyes follow their fingers as they work, the "Draughtsman" blows the charcoal dust from his page periodically, and the "Musician" seems to sigh with emotion as she plays (she actually breathes for an hour before and after the act, giving spectators a certain frisson as they arrive and depart).

Later on in the eighteenth century, engineers and automaton makers became concerned with trying to mechanize two processes deemed the epitome of living intelligence: speech and chess-playing. A flurry of talking heads in the 1770s, '80s



18th-century engraving showing all three of Vaucanson's automata — the "Flutist" to the left, "Piper" to the right, and the notorious duck in the middle. Featured in Henry René d'



Jaquet-Droz at the court of Louis XV with his automata (left to right): the "Writer", the "Musician", and the "Draughtsman" — a lithograph

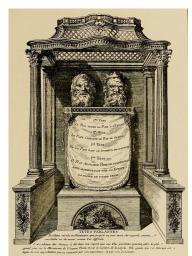
and '90s was

Allemagne's Histoire des jouets (1902) — Source .

reproduced in Scientific American, Vol. 88, Number 16 (April 1903)

triggered by a prize competition sponsored by the St Petersburg Academy of Sciences for a machine that could produce the sound of vowels. People went far beyond just vowels. A Frenchman named Mical designed a pair of talking heads in 1778.

They contained "artificial glottises arranged over taut membranes", but their dialogue in praise of Louis XVI was rather dull: "The King gives Peace to Europe", intoned the first head; "Peace crowns the King with Glory", replied the second; and so on.



Contemporary depiction of Mical's heads. reproduced in Henry René d'Allemagne's Histoire des jouets (1902) — Source

About a decade later, a Hungarian engineer named Wolfgang von Kempelen designed a speaking machine using an ivory glottis, bellows for lungs, a leather vocal tract with a hinged tongue, a rubber oral cavity and mouth, and a nose with two little pipes as nostrils. Its pronouncements were more whimsical than those of Mical's talking heads: "my wife is my friend", for example, and "come with me to Paris".

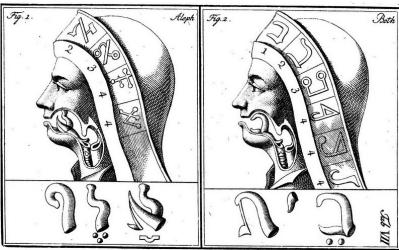


Illustration from Kempelen's Le mécanisme de la parole (1791) Source

Kempelen was more famous for another "automaton" that he designed and built in 1769, the chessplaying Turk. This lifesized model was exhibited all over Europe and America by Kempelen himself and then by others until its demise in a fire in 1854; in the course of its long career, reportedly beating both Napoleon and Charles Babbage.

Although aspects of its movement — the motion of the arms, head, etc. — were mechanical, it was not, of course, a full automaton. The crucial chess-playing aspect was the work of a succession of skillful and diminutive human chess-players concealed in its pedestal, something all but admitted by Kempelen who said his main achievement had been to create an illusion. People no doubt knew it was a hoax, but they were fascinated anyway, because it dramatized the question of the age: whether a machine could reason, and relatedly, whether the human mind might itself be a kind of machine.

Edgar Allan Poe was taken by the guestion and in 1836 wrote an essay about Kempelen's Turk and Babbage's Difference Engine. He believed a machine could calculate, because calculation was a fixed and determinate process, but not that a machine could play chess because, he said, chess was indeterminate: the machine would have to respond to its opponent's moves. So Babbage's machine was genuine but Kempelen's fraudulent.



Coloured engraving from Joseph Racknitz's 1789 pamphlet which attempted to reveal the secret workings of William Kempelen's alleged chess-playing automaton "The Turk" -Source

When I've assigned Poe's essay to engineering students, they've found his reasoning strange: why couldn't a machine respond to each move of its opponent? Here is another example of how people's intuitions about the nature of life, mechanism and science continually transform. Poe assumed a machine was necessarily unresponsive. Two centuries earlier, Descartes had made the opposite assumption, and almost two centuries later, so did my students.

How should we regard Hero of Alexandria's siphon-driven birds, the medieval automaton Christs, the Renaissance frolicsome engines, the android musicians, artists, writers and talking heads of the eighteenth century? They can certainly be seen as the ancestors of modern projects in robotics and artificial intelligence. But they were also expressions of a very different mode of understanding. Rather than the concepts of programming, feedback or information so important today, they were born from other ideas: animate versus inanimate matter, willful versus constrained motion, mindless versus intelligent labor. It is hard to imagine that our own conceptual frameworks will one day seem as remote and exotic as an Aristotelian account of Hero's siphons seems to us, but they surely will. Can knowing this perhaps help us to imagine what might come to replace information, programming and feedback as the key concepts for understanding life, sentience, mechanism and mind?

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Further Reading

The Restless Clock: A History of the Centuries-Long Argument over What Makes Living Things Tick (University Of Chicago Press, 2016)

by Jessica Riskin

An exploration into how the automata of early modern Europe can be seen as models for the new science of living things, tracing questions of science and agency through Descartes, Leibniz, Lamarck, and Darwin, among others.

Genesis Redux: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Artificial Life (University Of Chicago Press, 2007)

edited by Jessica Riskin

A collection of essays examining efforts to simulate life in machinery, to synthesize life out of material parts, and to understand living beings by comparison with inanimate mechanisms.

Leonardo's Lost Robots (Springer, 2006)

by Mark Rosheim

Reinterpreting Leonardo's legacy of notes, this book shows that apparently unconnected fragments from dispersed manuscripts actually comprise cohesive designs for functioning automata.

Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art ()

by E. R. Truitt

Discovering the forgotten history of fantastical, aspirational, and terrifying machines that captivated Europe in imagination and reality between the ninth and fourteenth centuries.

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Ghost Hunting at Elgin State Hospital Cemetery - My Haunted Life Too

myhauntedlifetoo.com

05 December 2016 | Ghost hunting, Haunted locations, Shadow people, Your Stories, Your True Encounters

This is the story of a ghost hunting trip to the old abandoned Elgin Mental hospital cemetery. I first heard about it online, where I read stories of the former grounds keeper hearing chilling sounds and heard it said that there may be three bodies in every grave. For over 100 years, the hospital operated as the Illinois State Institution for the insane. The unwanted were sent there to die and many horrific experiments were performed during the early years of treating mental diseases. Over 1000 people are said to be buried in the cemetery and it has a long held reputation as being haunted.

We initially had a hard time finding the place and we were about to give up when suddenly, we found it. Immediately, we could feel sadness. Intense sadness. Some of these people were apparently buried with others and they were mental patients. Being sensitive to the paranormal, I could feel their pain and suffering.

The following night, we performed our first investigation. Mind you, it is private property and I do not recommend going there after dark. When we went back for the first investigation, it was night and the atmosphere had changed from lost and sad to pain and anger. We immediately felt watched, as if something was staring right at us – or many things were staring at us. So we stood outside the car took some pictures and left. We caught orbs and a face in the pictures.

We returned a week later and finally went into the cemetery. We recorded an EVP, in which, clear as day, my wife's name was said. Truly haunting! After about 15 minutes, we started to hear sirens. Thinking it was the cops, we ran back to our car, but no cops ever show up. When we played back the EVP however, we realized that it was an old ghostly ambulance sound that we had heard. When we arrived back at HQ and had the time to review the EVP further, we also found that we had caught a demonic-sounding dog barking and its chains rattling.

Based on this, we then planned another investigation and two-weeks later, my team and I returned. We left an EVP recorder in the middle of the cemetery and we all walked to the other side of the site where we found an old, rotten wooden Hearse. As I and a fellow investigator headed back to pick up my EVP recorder, we saw a white light start to hover in the distance. We took photographs and continued to walk towards the light. It turned out to be a police officer. Luckily for us, the officer is very cool and allows us to stay an extra 10 minutes or so. The EVP again contained dog barks and also breathing sounds. That night, we also saw shadows that seemed to run back and forth across the cemetery.

Funnily enough, I felt welcome there as of the spirits were pleased to be visited as opposed to being forgotten. I have been back many times during the day and even taken flowers because those folks deserve to be remembered. It is undoubtedly haunted but the worst thing that ever happened to me there was a few scratches – which I put down to a ghostly guard dog doing his job – Good Dog!

Submitted by Randy

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Gnomes removed from roundabout for their own safety

metro.co.uk

Ashitha Nagesh for Metro.co.ukThursday 8 Dec 2016 5:14 pm



Gnomes removed from roundabout for their own safety

Controversial (Picture: SWNS)

Blue gnomes at the centre of a five-year row have finally been removed from a roundabout after they were repeatedly and brutally attacked.

The ornaments, which were each around threefeet-high, were installed in 2011 in an attempt to brighten up what is a rather dull road junction in Totnes, Exeter.

But the ugly, Snow White-themed gnomes soon became the target of the town's loathing.

Although some saw them as a 'bit of fun' and would earnestly defend them, most people (naturally)

thought they were tacky, and accused the gnomes of turning the town into a 'Westcountry Disneyland'.

In fact they have reportedly been attacked with rocks, picked up and violently hurled to the ground, and apparently even kidnapped.

Four of them even disappeared completely, never to be seen again.





Why (Picture: SWNS)

'They got so badly beaten up and attacked by people who had probably had a bit to drink, they ended up in a bit of a sorry state,' Vernon Gaye, head of China Blue, said.

'The idea had always been that they would fade into the background as the plants grew and people

would be able to just catch a glimpse of them as they drove by, and wonder what they had just seen.

'But they have continued to get beaten up and some literally had rocks bashed at them.'

Diana Cusack from Totnes Gardens, which looks after the planting on the roundabout, added: 'The gnomes were being hammered to death by people who would go there on a Saturday night and just bash them.

'They were not left in a gnome-like state and they had lost their blueness.'

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(Picture: Google)

Who is Roald Amundsen and how did he lead a secret expedition to the South Pole?

metro.co.uk

Imogen Groome for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 10:40 am



Google Doodle celebrates the first South Pole expedition

Today's Google Doodle shows a crew of

explorers on the South Pole, their victory flag being whipped around by the Antarctic wind.

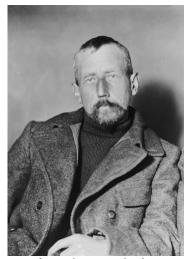
Google is commemorating the 105th anniversary of Roald Amundsen's expedition to the South Pole. But who was the explorer who secretly plotted a trip to Antarctica?

Amundsen was a keen explorer – and fiercely competitive.

He initially planned to venture to the North Pole, but when he learned his rivals, Frederick Cook and Robert E Peary, claimed they'd already done it in 1909, he changed his mind and prepared for a conquest of the South Pole instead.

His ship, Fram, was loaded with entertainment fuel – a library of 3,000 books, musical instruments and a gramophone, and set out in June 1910.

The mission? To be the first to travel that far south – and to raise enough money to pay off Amundsen's large debts. Tactical.



Amundsen was broke, apparently (Picture: Getty)

Amundsen was broke, apparently (Picture: Getty)

However, Amundsen kept the whole mission a secret for a while. He didn't want it to reach the press, so he only told his brother the truth.

The crew started out feeling pretty low, believing they were heading to the Arctic, but once Amundsen revealed the change of plan, they were raring to go.

Amundsen's expedition party was made up of 19 people and around 100 Greenland sled dogs. Which are adorable.

Without their furry friends, the team would not have been successful.

In fact, when the team returned, the ex-Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, raised a toast for Amundsen, then said 'Three cheers to the dogs', during

the adventurer's address to the Royal Geographical Society.

The team kept their spirits up through the extreme weather by telling stories, celebrating birthdays and holding guess-the-temperature contests.

'Hey, your turn. Guess what temperature it is.' 'Cold. It's cold.' (Picture: Getty)



'Hey, your turn. Guess what temperature it is.' 'Cold. It's cold.' (Picture: Getty)

Around 11 months after they set sail from Norway, the team reached the South Pole.

Just over a month later, British explorer Robert Falcon Scott reached the spot where the Norwegian flag had already been placed. Scott and his team of four placed their own flag in January 1912, but died of starvation and extreme cold on their way home.

The success of Amundsen's expedition was widely celebrated – however, many in the UK were unable to accept that a Norwegian had been the first to make it to the South Pole.

Amundsen was the first explorer to reach both poles, leading him to be dubbed 'the last of the Vikings'. His death was as dramatic as his life – in June 1928, aged 55, the airship he was in disappeared while participating in a rescue mission in the Arctic.

It's believed that Amundsen and his five crew members were killed after it crashed in the fog, but despite the Norwegian Government's efforts, the bodies were never found.

MORE: Urban explorers banned from climbing buildings and parachuting off them

MORE: Antarctic explorer Henry Worsley dies after falling ill just 30 miles from his goal

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This site uses cookies. By continuing, your consent is assumed. Learn more Nicole Morley for Metro.co.ukMonday 12 Dec 2016 3:36 pm



(Picture: Bunny Bundles Reborns/Facebook)

A doll created by Rachel Smith, Kathy's sister (Picture: Bunny Bundles Reborns/Facebook)

A grandmother who sells painted life-like dolls had to try desperately to convince police she wasn't selling real babies.

Kathy Cadle, who paints and sells the dolls, was reported as a suspected human trafficker.

The grandmother, from Sheffield Lake in Ohio, was at home chatting with her grandson online when police came knocking.

The officer said: 'There's a report of you selling a baby.' To which Ms Cadle replied: 'Are you kidding me?'

MORE: Pupils call out FA for patronising advice on how to get girls into football



The siblings inherited their love of realistic dolls from their mother (Picture: Bunny Bundles Reboms/Facebook)

The siblings inherited their love of realistic dolls from their mother (Picture: Bunny Bundles Reborns/Facebook)

She later found out that police had spent much of the day questioning her friends.

Ms Cadle handed one of her realistic dolls to Sgt. Frank Goscewski in order to convince him that she wasn't actually selling live infants. He left her property satisfied she was not guilty of the accusations of human trafficking.

Creating the dolls, which are made from vinyl, is something of a family tradition introduced to Ms Cadle and her sister Rachel Smith by their mother Dolores.

Smith's creations, sold under company name Bunny Bundles Reborns, have featured in front page spreads and are used as therapy dolls for patients with dementia and Alzheimer's.

Ms Cadle said: 'She ends up on the front page of the paper, and I end up being investigated.'

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A pinata representing U.S. President-elect Donald Trump as a devil burns during the traditional Burning of the Devil festival, ahead of Christmas in Guatemala City, Guatemala December 7, 2016. REUTERS/Luis Echeverria

GUATEMALA CITY (Reuters) - Revelers in Guatemala set ablaze cardboard representations of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump wearing devil horns during a traditional ceremony, "La Quema del Diablo", or the Burning of the Devil, held ahead of

Christmas every year.

Trump's hardline stance on immigration during his presidential election campaign, including a promise to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, has drawn anger from Latin Americans in the United States and around the world.

"We are against this person in many respects, regarding deportations, the wall he wants to build. We do not agree," said participant Astrid Soto, just before setting fire to the Trump figures, which clutched fistfuls of fake cash, and a U.S. flag.

Participants believe the practice of torching the devil helps banish bad spirits from their homes and neighborhoods. The custom began in the 16th century, but has spread out from various towns since the 1990s to become popular nationwide.

(Reporting by Reuters Television; Writing by Nicole Nee, Editing by Karishma Singh and Clarence Fernandez)

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by Eric Grundhauser December 14, 2016



If you're lucky, you can live in a home where a hairy little household imp will help keep your kitchen clean, or a domestic god will grant you everlasting good fortune. So long as you keep them happy.

From ancient Greece's goddess of the hearth, Hestia, to the hobs of Northern England, household spirits have been around for centuries. But most such mythical creatures double as gods of fire and agents of chaos, so failing to tend to their needs can lead to missing items, broken dishes, and calamitous fortune.

As you prepare your home for the holidays this year, here are some tips on how to keep particular household spirits in good standing.

Domovoi

Slavic mythology



Originating in Slavic mythology, the hairy little imp known as the domovoi is one of the world's creepier household gods. As the legends go, each house has a personal domovoi, which usually resides somewhere beneath the threshold, under the stove, or in the oven. The creatures are sometimes thought to be the spirit of the original head of the household.

Domovoi take the form of a tiny old

man, about the size of a small child, with a long gray beard. Sometimes they mirror aspects of a family ancestor, or even the current head of the household. They can also take on animal form, appearing as a cat, a dog, or even a snake.

To keep the domovoi content, you must keep a tidy household. The home needs to be kept in good condition, with dishes cleaned and put away, food not left out—unless it's a small table offering to the domovoi.

If the domovoi are happy, they might come out at night and perform small chores around the house and yard. However, if the domovoi becomes upset with the condition of the house or their treatment, they turn into pests, stealing small items, breaking things around the house, and disturbing people's sleep, among other nuisances.

Kotihaltia

Finnish mythology

In Finnish mythology, there is a type of spirit known as a "haltija," which acts as a protector of someone or something. And among these spirits, the kotihaltia looks after the home. Similar to other European household imps, the kotihaltia is a little elf figure that can act as either a helper or a trickster depending on its temperament.

These house gnomes are said to live in the attic or even the barn, looking out for and protecting the family that lives there. They are closely related to other haltija who hold domain over other parts of an estate, such as the saunatonttu, who specifically protect the sauna.

Trasgu

Spanish folklore



Originating in the regions of northern Spain, the goblin known as the Trasgu is another imp with a strange love of domestic chores and tendency toward mischief. Possibly related to the more violent and malevolent red cap of European folklore, the trasgu has more of an impish reputation than some of the more divine or ancestral spirits that can inhabit a home.

Trasgu appear as small, spindly elves that wear red cloaks and red caps. Their other notable features include a limp, and a hole in their left hand.

Sometimes they are described as having horns.

Trasgu should be provided with small amounts of food and access to a warm place to sleep, such as near a chimney. If they are happy, they will perform small household chores such as washing up, but if they are neglected, they will move and hide items around the house, break dishes, and make a mess.

To get rid of a trasgu, legend has it that you have to assign them an impossible task, like picking up grains, which will fall through the hole in their hand. Eventually they will get discouraged and leave the house.

Hob

Northern English folklore

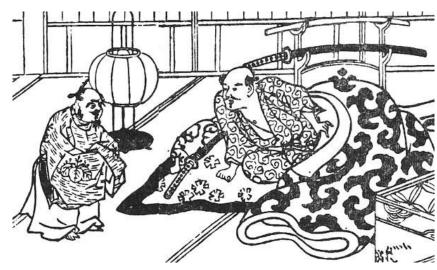
Coming out of the folklore of northern England, the hob is maybe one of the most well-known types of household spirits, having inspired the Harry Potter character, Dobby. According to the folklore, hobs are a more variable type of household spirit which can also inhabit shops and farms, helping with the work there, and being less closely associated with a specific house or family.

Not unlike in the Harry Potter series, hobs traditionally look like stunted elves that mainly come out at night to help with the chores, preferring not to be seen in their work.

Household hobs are often a positive presence, but one thing they really hate is to be rewarded for their work. Traditionally a hob will become offended and leave should the owner of the house try to give them a piece of clothing. However, pretty much any praise could be seen as an affront, and cause them to disappear. Just leave hobs to their work, and everything should be fine.

Zashiki-warashi

Japanese folklore



While some household spirits must be driven out in order to stop any calamity they might be inflicting on the residents, in the case of Japan's zashiki-warashi, it isn't until it leaves that you have to really worried.

For the most part, the zashiki-warashi remain invisible, or appear as a plump little kid, but only to children. Zashikiwarashi usually only show up to the adults or owners of a house if they are preparing to leave. Should the ghost

vacate the premises, it is a sure sign of impending doom and ruin. Best to just put up with their hijinks, rather than drive them off, and subject yourself to a ruinous fate.

Zashiki-warashi tend to inhabit nicer, older houses. They are fond of playing pranks like making noise in empty rooms, and unmaking the bedcovers. Despite this mischief, they are not seen as evil spirits, and if they take up residence in the home, it is usually a sign of good fortune.

Gabija

Lithuanian folklore

Rising up from the tales of Lithuanian folklore, the figure of Gabija is one of the more potentially destructive household gods. Another goddess of the hearth, Gabija is more akin to the living embodiment of fire than some of the more benevolent hearth gods.

Gabija appears in human form as a woman clad in a red dress, although she can also take the form of a cat or a rooster.

Paying respect to Gabija is as simple as observing proper care of your household flame. If the fire needs to be extinguished completely, it is wise to only do so using pure water, as any other liquid might anger the goddess.

If Gabija becomes displeased, she is said to go wandering. In other words, fire would spread through your house. Keeping her well attended could mean keeping your house from burning down.

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If You Survive Driving Off A Cliff You Get To See One Hell Of A Tow

jalopnik.com Andrew P Collins



Tow Job

Yesterday 9:00pm Filed to: Recovery



(Hilux hanging off Australia's Sea Cliff Bridge

You know you messed up when the "tow truck" they send is a helicopter.

The Sea Cliff Bridge sounds like the worst possible thing to drive off, but apparently two Australian teens managed to walk away after their Toyota Hilux went smashing through a guardrail at the end of November.

The 17-year-old driver lost control of the truck, crossed the road into oncoming traffic, smashed through a guardrail and only stopped short of the ocean because the vehicle was caught by trees. The 18-year-old passenger used a knife to cut the boys free and they were able to climb up the cliff to the road to flag down help, 9News reported last month.

They also speculated getting the truck off the cliffside would be an involved process that "might even require a crane."

The recovery vehicle ended up being a little fancier than that, though.

After sitting in the scrub for about two weeks, the Hilux was lifted to flat ground by the cable of a helicopter.

"The use of a helicopter to retrieve the vehicle meant there was no impact to road users and the whole operation took around 10 minutes," reports the *Illawarra Mercury*.

It remains unclear as to who footed what must have been a tremendous "towing fee" to get the truck back, but all I really want to know is if the truck started again.

The driver has reportedly been charged with something like "driving in a dangerous manner." At age 17, the Australian driver was operating on a provisional "P-Plate" license which adds restrictions like

a zero-tolerance blood-alcohol content policy, no driving between midnight and 5 a.m., and no driving a vehicles with performance upgrades or a certain power to weight ratio.

If you really do want to speed on the Sea Cliff Bridge, looks like you can rip it as hard as you want in Forza Horizon 3:

Hat tip to Paulo!

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Infamous jewel thief Doris Payne strikes again at age 86, police say nbcnews.com

Dec 14 2016, 1:09 pm ET

by Miguel Almaguer, David Douglas and Tracy Connor

Legendary jewel thief Doris Payne's love of bling has landed her in the clink once again.

The 86-year-old, whose globe-trotting exploits were chronicled in a 2013 documentary, was arrested this week in the Atlanta suburb Dunwoody for allegedly trying to swipe a \$2,000 necklace from a mall jewelry store.

The bust comes a year after she was arrested at another Atlanta mall and charged with stealing \$690 Christian Dior earrings from a Saks Fifth Avenue store.

Charges in that case are still pending, and there is also a warrant out for her arrest in connection with a July 2015 theft of a diamond engagement ring from a store in Charlotte.

Payne was being held at the DeKalb County Jail. Her lawyer in the 2015 case said he is not representing her in the new arrest. A close friend of Payne was "devastated" to hear about the new charges.

"I have no idea why she would go out and do this," said Sonjia Williams, who took in Payne for a year. "She knows better."

Williams told NBC News that she believed Payne was starting a new chapter in her life. She had just moved to her own apartment — Williams bought her pots and pans for Christmas — and was hoping for a book deal.

"I pray that she's released, because she's not well and I just know that she doesn't belong there," Williams said.

If Payne is released, Williams said she knows just what she's going to do. "I'm going to take her to church," she said.

In past interviews, Payne has played coy about her crimes and what she has said is more than 20 arrests. She will call herself a thief in one breath and then deny stealing in the next.

"I don't dictate what happens when I walk in the store. The people in charge dictate what happens with me when I walk in the store," Payne told the Associated Press earlier this year.

"I don't tell a person in the store I want to see something that costs \$10,000. They make those decisions based on how I present myself and how I look."

She added, "I've never, ever walked out of a jewelry store with a piece of stolen merchandise in my purse, in my pocket. Never. I've never, ever concealed. Never."

Dunwoody police say Payne had the diamond necklace in her back pocket when she tried to exit the Von Maur store on Tuesday evening.

Matthew Pond, co-director and co-producer of the documentary "The Life and Crimes of Doris Payne," said he was sad but not surprised to hear of his former subject's latest run-in with the law.

"The documentary we made about her focused on a crime she was accused of in San Diego and during her sentencing, as sad as he was to have to send her to prison, the judge said, 'She's the Terminator. She won't stop,'" Pond said.

"And now I'm thinking of her, 86 years old and arrested again, and I'm thinking he was right. She won't stop."

Pond said he thinks Payne sees jewelry stores as a paycheck and a challenge.

"She's an adventure-seeker and she gets bored easily and she loves the attention," he said. "She likes playing the part and getting into the role. She's a bit of an actress.

"She's a very morally ambiguous person," Pond added. "In some ways she reminds me of the character in 'Breaking Bad,' Walter White, who started off doing bad things for a good reason and then got enamored with the thrill of it."

• © 2016 NBCnews.com

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CASE

OF

FATAL PLEURITIS,

APPARENTLY THE EFFECT OF THE PRESENCE IN THE RIGHT PLEURA OF A PIECE OF IVORY, CONSISTING OF FOUR ARTIFICIAL TEETH, WHICH HAD BEEN SWALLOWED THIRTEEN YEARS BEFORE.

BY W. G. CARPENTER.

Case of pleuritis

People who wear dentures sometimes lose them, as you might mislay a pair of glasses, but it's rare to do it in quite this fashion. This case, from the 1842 volume of *Guy's Hospital Reports*, was reported by one W.G. Carpenter.

Mr. H., aged 35, the subject of the present case, was an Assistant to Mr. Watts, an extensive chemist in the Edgware Road, with whom he had resided for upwards of eight years. Mr. H was afflicted from childhood with asthmatic bronchitis; and it appears that several branches of his family have fallen victims to pleuritic, pulmonic, or tracheal affections.

Broadly, respiratory infections: those affecting the windpipe, the lungs or the membrane surrounding them.

With the exception of an occasional attack of increased difficulty of breathing, nothing which attracted particular notice seems to have occurred during the early part of his residence with his last employer; although, from the curious facts that were brought to light in the post-mortem examination, I think he must have suffered more or less for some years past; but his high flow of spirits, and his devoted attachment to business, were perhaps the means of diverting his attention from his own state of health. I first became acquainted with him in the early part of last winter. I never found him free from fever: his pulse was always above 100, skin hot, with other symptoms of inflammatory action.

Doctor Carpenter declined to prescribe for the patient. This was a matter of professional courtesy, as it transpired that another physician had already been consulted. The man's symptoms continued throughout the winter. A few months later he took a turn for the worse:

On Friday the 13th of April I received a note from him, requesting me to call, as he had been attacked with pain in the side and chest, which had that evening become so acute as to render coughing, speaking, and breathing, almost impossible. I immediately visited him. He complained of an acute pain in the right side of the chest shooting up to the clavicle, increased upon deep inspiration: respiration short, and hurried: pulse 140, rather wiry: skin hot and dry: tongue furred at the base and margin, red in the centre: bowels confined: cough troublesome.

After listening to his chest the doctor concluded that there was an infection of the right lung: breathing sounds on that side were inaudible.

Considering the case one of active inflammation, I bled him from the arm to eight ounces, without inducing syncope [fainting]: this relieved him of pain: he could then breathe with more freedom, and said that bloodletting was always of service to him. I ordered him some calomel, antimony, and compound extract of colocynth, to be taken at bed-time.

A cocktail of rather unpleasant laxatives. Colocynth, also known as the bitter cucumber or bitter apple, was particularly nasty, described by one contemporary pharmacological journal as a 'drastic...cathartic, exciting

inflammation of the mucous membranes of the intestines, causing severe griping, vomiting and bloody discharges.'

After three days, and despite a variety of treatments and medicines, there was no improvement in the patient's condition. Dr Carpenter sought a second opinion from a colleague. The upshot was a new therapeutic regime, of questionable merit:

An enema of gruel and olive-oil to be administered immediately. Diet to be more generous: some port-wine to be given occasionally throughout the day, with good beef-tea.

A few days later matters came to a head.

I had prepared the requisites for administering an enema, to relieve the abdomen and allow its muscles more freedom of action; and had left him for a few seconds, to get some wine which he might take as a support through the operation, when I was summoned up to his room, as he had become very restless. I went immediately, but only to see him breathe his last.

The following day Dr Carpenter and another colleague performed a post mortem. They opened the man's chest to look at the lungs.

As soon as I passed the scalpel into the right pleura, a gush of very offensive gas escaped. The pleural cavity on this side contained five pints of sero-purulent fluid.

Thin yellow pus, in other words. Just try to imagine what five pints of the stuff would look like.

The lungs were both obviously diseased, but there was one obvious anomaly, a small hole on the surface of the right lung. A little later Dr Carpenter discovered what had made it:

After I had completed the examination, I was removing the remaining fluid and coagula of blood that had escaped from the pulmonary vessels to replace the lung, when I came to an irregular substance, which, when examined, turned out to be, to our great astonishment, a piece of ivory worked into four artificial front teeth, covered with a brownish crust, with a pointed piece of silver riveted into the upper part of the teeth, which had evidently assisted in fixing them to the upper jaw; the base of the silver rivet surrounded with wadding. At each extremity there are two holes, which no doubt once contained the wire that fixed this mass of false teeth to the adjoining sound ones.

These false teeth were not in the stomach or intestines, but in the chest cavity! How on earth had they got there?

The father of Mr. H being in the house at the time, was referred to about the teeth; and he immediately exclaimed, that his son swallowed them thirteen years ago, in a fit of coughing, during his apprenticeship. I again examined the oesophagus; and we were satisfied that there was neither a recent wound nor a cicatrix [scar] to be found; and the only opening through which it could have escaped into the pleura of the right thoracic cavity, where I found it, must have been the fistulous [anomalous] one in the corresponding lung.

The doctor realised that a set of false teeth lodged in the lung would probably be intensely painful, so asked whether the patient had been in serious distress; but apparently not.

The morning after it happened, he mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Champley, his master, who advised him to take an aperient, supposing the teeth had passed into the stomach: it was thought that the teeth had passed away by the bowels, unnoticed;—and then the circumstance gradually became forgotten. He had been subject, from a child, to asthmatic bronchitis, which perhaps, from the constant, efforts at breathing, had dilated the airpassages, and, with the coating of mucus that no doubt existed, might have rendered the parts somewhat insensible.

Dr Carpenter concluded that the patient had managed to *inhale* the denture, that it had entered the lung and then worked its way through the wall of the organ before lodging inside the pleura. He noted that one of the false teeth was still quite sharp, which might have created the opening he observed. It all seems rather unlikely (you'd expect such a major injury to have caused serious bleeding and altogether more dramatic symptoms),

but it's difficult to explain the case any other way. What is particularly remarkable about the case – whatever the explanation – is that the teeth remained in situ for *thirteen years* before the patient's death.

The report ends with a postscript for the morbidly curious:

The teeth are now in the possession of Mr. Carpenter, West Street, Finsbury Circus.

Where I'm sure he received a steady stream of visitors eager to see them.



The missing teeth

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LA County Metro seeing \$\$\$\$ with new opportunity to sell naming rights to rail lines, stations

By Steve Scauzillo , San Gabriel Valley Tribune

dailynews.com

LA Dailv News

Los Angeles Daily News Hop on board Universal Studios Hollywood Red Line. Take the Snapchat/Santa Monica Expo Line. Or ride the Blue Line to the Staples/LA Live! Station.

These are some of the fictional names for rail, bus lines and transit stations made entirely possible by a new advertising policy adopted by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) governing board last week.

The Corporate Sponsorship/Naming Rights Program was approved by the board, with Los Angeles City Councilman Mike Bonin and county Supervisor Sheila Kuehl voting in opposition. A marketing company could be hired by early next year to entertain offers and assign prices for naming rights of hundreds of Metro assets.

In short, Metro is looking to make millions of dollars a year by allowing institutions such as colleges and medical centers as well as corporations to rename a rail line, bus line, station or building by stamping their name and logo all over the facility, across station signs and locator graphics as well as digital incarnations such as Google maps or other online directional services.

"What we are looking at are all stations, all lines," explained Glen Becerra, Metro deputy executive officer for communications and marketing. "So if you have a rail line like the Gold Line or the Purple Line, one of those assets could be considered (for corporate renaming)."

Metro, which just won approval of a tax measure that will generate \$121 billion in the next 40 years, put out an all-hands-on-deck search for more revenues earlier this year called the Risk Allocation Matrix. Basically, CEO Phil Washington wanted each department to either cut costs or find additional revenue.

The staff report calls the revenue from selling corporate naming rights "a prudent means of maximizing the value of the agency's capital investments and assets."

Kuehl, who has objected repeatedly at committee meetings and at the governing board meeting, believes the policy is wrong, offensive and may place the agency in the middle of a constitutional court battle. At a board meeting on Dec. 1, Kuehl further called the policy "inappropriate."

"It is all about products, advertising and nothing but making money no matter what," she said Wednesday. "I think the commercialization of everything has really gone too far."

The naming of stadiums is the most common — and most lucrative — example of naming rights today.

Such deals can be worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Marketers know that their clients' brand will be seen by millions of fans, or in this case by train and bus riders, and also viewed on TV and various Internet and social media platforms that make such deals worth the cost.

"I'm happy they are doing this," said Professor Kenneth Merchant, who taught a course on accountancy ethics at the Leventhal School of Accounting, part of the Marshall School at USC. "I think it is a clever idea."

Ira Kalb, a professor at the USC Marshall School of Business, in an email wrote the transit agency could lessen its reliance on fares and taxes by using private sponsorship dollars to augment its operations budget.

Becerra happily points to a deal made by University of California, San Diego with the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System. The La Jolla-based public university signed a 30-year deal for more than \$30 million to rename the MTS Blue Line, "The University of California San Diego Blue Line."

Becerra said the San Diego transit system created the right balance by not removing the original name. "It maintains the familiarity of the system and adds corporate identity into it," he said.

He suggested that the Pico Station south of downtown Los Angeles, with stops for both the Metro Blue and Expo lines, could be renamed the "Pico Station at LA Live!" or something with Staples Center in the name. "That

would be a win-win," he said. Other companies, such as the social media company Snapchat, which is building a huge presence in Santa Monica, may want to get in on the naming game on the new Expo Line.

Historical landmarks, such as the art deco-style Union Station owned by Metro, most likely would be off limits to say, renaming it the Coca-Cola Station or any other rename, he said. All renaming proposals would need approval of the governing board, while smaller sponsorships worth \$500,000 or less would not, according to the policy.

But turning down an unwelcome proposal would place Metro and its board into a First Amendment fight, Kuehl warned.

"If the board turns down somebody, you might violate the First Amendment," she said.

Merchant said the only danger is giving naming rights to an organization that later commits a crime or acts unethically. One example is Enron Field in Houston, which was changed after the company's legal troubles became headline news. Later, the naming rights were sold by the owner of the Astros to Minute Maid, a division of Coca-Cola.

"We want to make sure we vet these organizations carefully," Becerra said.

Metro would not sell naming rights to businesses associated with alcohol and tobacco, adult entertainment, arms/guns and weapons, political parties and religious groups, he added.

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The Local

Las Fallas: Valencia's fire festival granted Unesco heritage status

thelocal.es



One of the ninots representing Mariano Rajoy in 2015. Photo: Jose Jordan / AFP

2 December 2016
11:13 CET+01:00
Valencia's colourful, noisy and
explosive annual celebration of Las
Fallas has been inscribed on Unesco's
'intangible heritage' list.

The festival was granted its new status at a Unesco meeting in Addis Ababa this week alongside 15 other cultural traditions from around the world, including an ancient martial art from Egypt, breadmaking in Iran and a wine-growers festival in Switzerland.

Las Fallas is celebrated each March in Spain's eastern city of Valencia with a week-long fiesta honoring Saint Joseph, the patron saint of the carpenter's guild.

The festival, which dates back to the 18th century, is marked with the construction of hundreds of giant wooden, cardboard, or papier-mâché sculptures, known as ninots.

These figurines are often satirical in nature and send up the politicians of the day.

Each afternoon during the fiesta, at 2pm, an ear-shattering display of colourful firecrackers are set off followed by parades and traditional dancing in the street

On the final day, huge bonfires are built and the ninots are burned while thecity sky is filled with fireworks.

The 2016 fiesta was one of the biggest on record with an estimated 1.5million attending celebrations in Spain's third largest city.

Spain already boasts several other activities included on Unesco's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including flamenco and the human towers of Catalonia.

By Daniel Uria | Dec. 8, 2016 at 12:00 PM



An overdue library book was returned to a British school 120 years late. Alice Gillett, the granddaughter of former Hereford Cathedral School student Arthur Boycott, found the book among 6,000 others and returned it to the school. Photo courtesy of Hereford Cathedral School

HEREFORD, England, Dec. 8 (UPI) -- A long overdue library book was returned to a British school nearly 12 decades after it was originally checked out.

Professor Arthur Boycott, a former student who attended Hereford Cathedral School from 1886 to 1894, checked out "The Microscope and its Revelations" by Dr William B. Carpenter and kept it until it was

discovered by his granddaughter Alice Gillett 120 years later.

"I can't imagine how the school has managed without it!" Gillett said.

She told the school she found the book among 6,000 others, as she sorted through them following the death of her husband.

Gillett says she believed the book served her grandfather well, as he eventually graduated first in his class in Natural Science, became a distinguished naturalist and pathologist and published his first paper listing which snail species were found in Herefordshire at age 15.

"My grandmother said he always had snails in his pockets," Gillet said.

A school spokesperson told The Guardiann Gillet was lucky her grandfather borrowed the book from the school, as they do not charge late fees to students.

"We don't want to put them off borrowing books," the spokesperson said. "Our pupils are really, really good at bringing them back."

The school estimated if the book had been borrowed from Hereford Library, the fine would have been \$9,351.

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By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

13 December 2016



1970s, and that's where it was last seen.

Image copyrightNorthern Territory Government

An Aboriginal painting that went missing in 1981 has been found by chance hanging in the office of a tourism official in Australia's Northern Territory (NT).

The piece, Untitled (Travelling Dreaming) by acclaimed artist Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri, is estimated to be worth up to A\$150,000 (US\$110,000; £90,000) and was the subject of extensive searches after its disappearance 35 years ago, the ABC news website reports. Often referred to as a Papunya board, it was loaned to the NT Chief Minister's Office in the late

But that was all unbeknown to NT tourism chief Alistair Shields, who found it in a store room and decided it would brighten the walls at the Department of Tourism and Culture in Darwin. "The office needed a little bit of life and colour, however, I had no idea that I was hanging a prized piece of Northern Territory art," Mr Shields says.

The painting could have stayed there unnoticed had it not been for head of arts Angela Hill, who spotted it hanging on the wall during a routine meeting.

The region's culture minister, Lauren Moss, describes the "very unusual mode of discovery" as a "wonderful moment of luck that brings a terrific end to a 35 year mystery". She says the painting will now be returned to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, where it will go on display in July 2017.

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Man ruins pal's sex life as he chops off manhood while cutting firewood

By Samantha Payne 13:48, 9 DEC 2016 Updated 09:34, 10 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Man accidentally cuts friend's penis with chainsaw while cutting firewood

The 49-year-old man warned his mate to be careful with the chainsaw before he accidentally hit him in the groin.



src="http://brightcove01.brightcove.com/24/4221396001/201612/3429/422139600 vs.jpg?pubId=4221396001" class="video-thumbnail"/>

A man's sex life could be marred forever after his pal accidentally cut off his penis while they were cutting firewood together.

The pair who are neighbours were having a few drinks in the village of Vanatory in Romania's Iasi County before the accident happened.

The 49-year-old reportedly warned his 53-year-old neighbour to be careful with the chainsaw before lunging the saw towards him for a joke, which then turned ugly as he accidentally whipped off his mate's

manhood instead

The casualty was rushed to Parhon Hospital where he remains in a serious but stable condition.



Parhon Hospital in lasi entrance

Surgeons tried to save as much as the man's penis at they could.

But they could not commit to whether he would be able to enjoy a normal sex life again.

His wife who witnessed the horrific accident alongside

their 14-year-old son, now wants to press charges against her husband's friend.

The woman said: "We were cutting wood and I called our neighbour to help. Suddenly I saw my husband covered in blood."

But the accused man insists it was a just an innocent joke that went wrong.

He said: "I was holding the chainsaw and I said: 'Be careful - I could cut your knees'.

"Everything happened in play, it was a joke. I didn't want to cut him, I was helping him to cut wood and this is what happened. I'm not a criminal.

"I hope I don't go to prison."

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Man blows £1m on luxury cars after bank error gives him unlimited overdraft

metro.co.uk

Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.ukFriday 9 Dec 2016 2:54 pm



Luke Moore, 29, who was £5,300 in debt at the time, treated himself to luxury holidays, a £54,000 Aston Martin, a £21,000 Maserati and a £32,000 boat (Picture: Luke Brett Moore / Facebook)

What would you do if you had an unlimited overdraft?

Hopefully you'd be a little more responsible than this guy who blew more than £1m on sports cars, speed boats, strippers and parties.

Because of a technical glitch with his bank, Luke Moore, then 22, had access to an unlimited amount of cash and took full advantage of it.

Moore, who was £5,300 in debt at the time, treated himself to luxury holidays, a £54,000 Aston Martin, a £21,000 Maserati and a £32,000 boat.



He was given an unlimited overdraft due to a technical glitch with his bank (Picture: NSW Police)

He was eventually caught and jailed on fraud charges. (Picture: NSW Police)

But he was eventually caught and jailed on fraud charges.

Yet after arguing that his actions were not deceptive, he

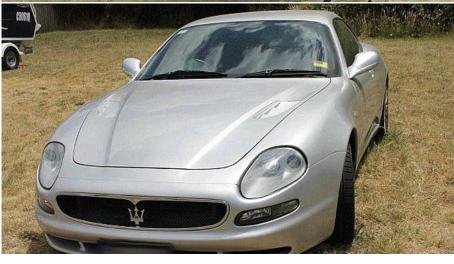
won an appeal against his conviction last week.

Now, Moore says he's happier than ever without all that cash.

Moore says he's happier than ever without all that cash. (Picture: NSW Police)

(Picture: NSW Police)

He told Daily Telegraph: 'I pull more chicks now with \$20 in my pocket than I did when I was



splashing the bank's cash.



'With age comes wisdom and confidence and I've learned money doesn't buy everything — but it was great while it lasted.'

(Picture: NSW Police)

Moore was jailed in 2015 and handed four years for obtaining a financial advantage by deception and three years for dealing proceeds of crime.

Yet the Court of Appeal in New South Wales ruled that he had not deceived anyone and overturned his conviction.

At the time of his arrest, he owed £1.24million.



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Man Who Looks Like Santa Asked To Leave Six Flags

cbslocal.com

BURLESON (CBS11) - A Burleson man resembling Santa Claus ended up on Six Flags' naughty list on Saturday. Jerry Henderson got in trouble for looking like Santa and handing out candy to kids at the theme park.

Jerry Henderson and his wife visit Six Flags Over Texas almost every weekend and walk the park for exercise. He told CBS11 his routine has been going on for three years and he'd never had a problem until now.

"This ain't a costume," insisted Henderson, who for almost 20 years has maintained a resemblance to Santa. During the holiday season. Henderson wears the same Christmas-themed vest and hat every day.

"I go to Walmart like this. This is me," he said. "I enjoy making kids smile," he said.

Henderson got in trouble after he says a woman asked him to pose for a picture with her children.

"Knelt down, put my arms around them, and afterward I reached in my wife's walker, pulled out two candy canes, handed it to them," recalled Henderson.

He said he was then approached by park security.

"'We're gonna have to ask you to leave.' I said, 'For what reason?' He said, 'You look too much like Santa Claus.' And I'm like, 'Are you kidding me?" he recalled. "I do not approach kids. The parents come to me."

Six Flags released this statement on the matter:

"We apologize that Mr. Henderson was inconvenienced, but the safety of our guests is always our highest priority. We cannot knowingly allow individuals who are not approved by the park to interact with small children in this capacity. Mr Henderson was handing out candy to our younger guests and was dressed up as Santa which is in violation of our No Costume policy. When asked to change he refused and at that point was asked to leave."

Henderson said he never approaches children, but responds to requests from their parents.

He also said he offered to take off the hat and stop giving away candy, but he claims a park manager told him he'd have to lose the beard.

"Not for you, Six Flags, or anybody else, am I shaving my beard off," he said.

Henderson requested a refund from Six Flags for his season pass, but has yet to hear back.

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Revelers dressed in holiday theme costumes participate in SantaCon on a rooftop bar Saturday,

Dec. 13, 2014, in New York. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

Posted:Dec 07 2016 09:07PM EST

Updated:Dec 07 2016 09:07PM

EST



Revelers dressed in holiday theme costumes participate in SantaCon on a rooftop bar Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014, in New York. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)

NEW YORK (AP) -- The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is banning alcohol on Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad trains and stations during this weekend's costumed pub crawl in New York known as SantaCon.

The transit agency said the intent is to maintain orderly travel and safe station and terminal operations.

Alcohol will not be permitted on Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad trains and in stations from noon Saturday through noon Sunday.

MTA police officers will be on duty at Penn Station, Grand Central Terminal, stations and trains to enforce the restriction.

Police will confiscate alcoholic beverages and issue summonses carrying fines or imprisonment. Police also may remove violators from trains or stations.

Mobilis In Mobili

Article #366 • written by Gustaf Hildebrand

The submarine, designated *O-12* in U.S. Naval lingo, measured in at 175 feet long. She was, even by the standards of the early 1930's, not a particularly impressive sight, with a brief career spent meandering about the then-quiet Panama Canal Zone. Decommissioned on 17 June 1924, she was consigned to the Philadelphia Navy Yard to await scrapping. It was an unremarkable fate for a relatively unremarkable vessel, and were events indeed to play out in this particular fashion, it is doubtful the memory of *O-12* would live on past some musty Naval archive. This early and rickety contraption for sailing beneath the waves was, however, destined for greater things, as she became the first machine to take humans past—or rather, beneath—one of the last great unexplored frontiers the Earth has to offer.

The boat in question was a near-antique. Predating the American entry into World War I, she had been built in 1916 by the Lake Torpedo Boat Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, designated with the hull number SS-73. Unexpectedly, her ultimate fate in the hands of Philadelphia's scrappers was sidelined by an eccentric Australian gentleman, though it is safe to assume that no tears were shed in the U.S. Naval headquarters when he offered to take her off the Navy's hands. *O-12* was given a new, though ultimately brief, lease on life, in a journey that was to span the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean and past the rim of the Arctic Circle. It was an expedition that in the literal sense would go where no man had gone before, furthering the frontiers of science...while simultaneously threatening everyone involved with watery graves and financial ruin.



Hubert Wilkins

At first glance, Hubert Wilkins might have seemed an unlikely candidate for a polar explorer. Born in 1888 in balmy Mount Bryan, South Australia, he was the thirteenth child of a family of pioneer sheep farmers. His first occupation—somewhat stereotypically—was that of kangaroo hunter. Young Hubert's interest in meteorology was piqued at an early age, perhaps as a side effect of a childhood spent in the drought-prone Australian Outback where one's livelihood often depended on the ability to predict weather and climate. Before long, he emerged as a young man of multiple talents: aviator, photographer, journalist, and explorer. His early adult life was in large part spent beyond the borders of his native Australia, at first accompanying the Ottoman army as a photographer during the First Balkan War in 1912. The following year he embarked on a venture into the polar regions as a part of Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Canadian-funded Arctic expedition in which several members perished

after their ship became stuck in the ice.

It was during this expedition that Wilkins first envisioned using a submarine to explore the polar regions, and over the course of the next several years he formulated a plan to turn the concept into a reality. He cemented his reputation as an Arctic explorer in 1928 when he completed a grueling twenty-hour flight from Alaska to Spitsbergen, a pioneering feat of aeronautics that earned him a knighthood from King George V. Wilkins' accomplishments had by that point also earned him the attention of American newspaper tycoon Randolph Hearst, who saw in Wilkins the kind of gentlemanly adventurism that could potentially become irresistible front-page material. In 1929, Hearst invited Wilkins to a round-the-globe flight aboard one of the technological marvels of interwar

Europe, the airship *Graf Zeppelin*. This made Wilkins, perhaps unbeknownst to himself, the first Australian to embark on a circumnavigation of the globe by airship.

While aboard the *Graf Zeppelin*, Wilkins came up with a suitably grandiose way to attract sponsors to his planned subpolar expedition: Suppose his submarine were to smash through the ice and meet up with the *Graf Zeppelin* at the geographic North Pole itself? The event would surely become a media spectacle, covering the front page of every newspaper on the planet. Hearst, upon hearing of Wilkins' plan, was ecstatic, and offered financial backing in the form of \$250,000, or approximately \$13 million in present-day dollars. This, augmented by additional funds from wealthy adventurer Lincoln Ellsworth the following year, was enough to offer Wilkins a financial base for his ambitious voyage.

With Hearst's newspaper empire at his back, word of Wilkins' upcoming expedition reached every corner of America, and beyond. Even Walt Disney was exhilarated by the plan, and he sent Wilkins a personal, hand-drawn card depicting Mickey Mouse astride a submarine's ice-encrusted conning tower. For the symbolic sum of one dollar per year, Wilkins leased a decommissioned submarine from the U.S. Navy, an antique World War I-era O-Class boat—*O-12*. He recruited a crew to man his newly acquired vessel, and set about retrofitting the aging submarine with a battery of scientific instrumentation and technical add-ons. In a disturbing omen of what is to come, the modifications were the product of guesswork rather than experience, as the shipwright has never before produced vessels fit for Arctic waters.

In 1931, after a year's worth of work, Wilkins' boat stood ready. The exterior modifications had turned the old O-Class submarine into a peculiar and unconventional underwater vessel, bearing little resemblance to the obsolete vessel from which she was built. Among the additions was an upward-facing drill that would enable the crew to bore through ice and escape in case of an emergency. A heavy-duty shock absorber was attached to the nose of the vessel, intended to soak up the impact of drifting chunks of ice. A large hydraulic "tongue" was installed behind the conning tower, designed to brace itself against the ice above in a crude form of collision avoidance. Large wooden skids were mounted on top of the hull, intended to deflect ice when diving and underwater. One of the more novel ideas saw the torpedo room converted into a pressure chamber, allowing the scientists onboard direct access to the outside ocean via a hatch in the hull.



On 24 March 1931, the submarine was ready for her naming ceremony in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York. As Prohibition was in full swing, Wilkins' wife, Suzanne Bennett Wilkins, used ice cubes to christen the vessel *Nautilus*, after the submarine in Jules Verne's classic adventure novel 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Among the variety of dignitaries present was Jean-Jules Verne, grandson of the legendary science fiction pioneer. An orchestra played *La Marseillaise*, and as a final homage to the French novelist, Wilkins had a plaque fixed to the hull upon which three words in Latin spelled out Captain Nemo's motto—*Mobilis In Mobili*, "moving amidst movement."

The first of many problems to come revealed itself as the *Nautilus* began her sea trials, when the submarine accidentally plunged below her

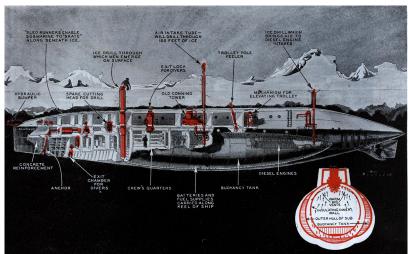
maximum depth. The crew finally emptied the ballast tanks, and the *Nautilus* surfaced, though the massive exterior pressure had resulted in damage that needed to be repaired before she could venture any further. The expedition lagged behind schedule before it even began, and the

newspapers that had once been so enthusiastic about his ambitious voyage began to direct surly criticism at Wilkins, whom they accused of being a reckless risk-taker. The criticism wasn't without basis, as the old and relatively unreliable *Nautilus* gave rise to the uncomfortable possibility that the submarine might become the crew's grave.

Finally, the *Nautilus* and her twenty-man crew, including Wilkins, departed from New York. The first port of call: Plymouth, England; then Bergen, Norway; and then onward to the North Pole via Spitsbergen. It was a daunting journey that was going to take some four weeks, assuming everything went well. The delay caused by the repairs had also had the unwelcome side effect of turning the venture into a race against time. Before long, vicious autumnal storms would engulf the Arctic, meaning that the expedition's window of opportunity was closing with alarming rapidity. The antiquated technology of the *Nautilus* also meant that spending lengthy sessions underwater to ride out bad weather—as modern submarines are able to do—wasn't a reliable option. The O-Class submarines, built in the late 1910's, came from an era when submarines were still primarily designed as surface vessels, and as such were only capable of submerged travel in relatively brief stints.

At just one week into the trans-Atlantic trek, the *Nautilus* encountered rough seas. The crew suffered from violent seasickness as the submarine rolled up to a hundred degrees in the massive waves. Worse still, the engines cut out. The crew attempted repairs once the storm died down, but the necessary spare parts were not onboard. Some amongst the crew began to harbor second thoughts—the realization sunk in that the submarine that was supposed to take them beneath the Arctic ice and back was in less-than-optimal condition. Adrift in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean with no engine power, the crew had no other option but to send out an SOS and hope that someone was listening.

By chance, the dreadnought *USS Wyoming* was in the vicinity, and she steamed to the aid of the *Nautilus*. The warship offered to tow the vessel to England, though the crew of the *Nautilus* stood divided. Some wanted to see the mission through, while others—unconvinced of the *Nautilus*' seaworthiness—wanted to depart at the next port of call. The *Wyoming* finally delivered the stricken *Nautilus* to the British Isles, though the submarine was once again in need of extensive repairs. Wilkins was at that point justifiably worried that they wouldn't be able to reach the Arctic before winter set in, and his troubles only increased as another precious month was lost in dry dock.



Cutaway illustration of the Nautilus for Modern Mechanics magazine, 1931

Cutaway illustration of the *Nautilus* for Modern Mechanics magazine, 1931

The *Nautilus* finally left dry dock and steamed north. This time the journey from Plymouth to Bergen was mercifully free of incidents and technical failures. Once in Norway, final preparations commenced for the voyage under the ice as supplies and scientific instrumentation were brought onboard. New crew members joined in, amongst them, Harald Sverdrup of Norway—one of the world's leading experts in oceanography.

Wilkins, undeterred, was ready to set off for the North Pole when he received a telegram from his wealthy industrialist sponsor, Randolph Hearst. Hearst argued that Wilkins should abort the expedition and try again the following year. In spite of his sponsor's pleas, Wilkins departed for the North Pole. After a final stopover at Spitsbergen, the *Nautilus* finally set a course toward the polar ice cap. As they steamed towards ever-more-northerly latitudes, the crew members were reminded that they were piloting a submarine that was not originally constructed with such frigid waters in mind. Inside the hull, conditions steadily approached miserable levels as the temperature rapidly plunged.

Despite the cold, the crew members began to deploy their experiments. Sverdrup, the oceanographer, utilized a specially-designed pendulum to measure the Earth's gravity. He knew that gravity is not uniform, varying minutely from place to place—the closer one is to the Earth's core, the stronger are the gravitational forces exerted, and the faster the pendulum should swing. As predicted, Sverdrup noticed how his pendulum swung faster in the polar regions than it did at Earth's equator. Though measurements had been taken earlier that indicated that the Earth was not a perfect orb, it is in part thanks to Sverdrup's work aboard the *Nautilus* that we now know that the Earth is oblate spheroid—a shape that is almost spherical, but with a slight bulge at the equator.

Conditions aboard steadily worsened as the vessel approached the ice cap. The crew members' visible breath created a layer of hoarfrost that coated everything inside as the temperature dropped below freezing. The crew had to constantly move around in order to stave off hypothermia, and morale sunk almost as rapidly as the thermometer's mercury. Life within the *Nautilus* became a cold, miserable slog as the Arctic Ocean turned the submarine into a claustrophobic, refrigerated sarcophagus. There was little option but to endure, though some amongst the crew began to wonder whether they'd return alive if they attempt a dive. Would they really be able to spend several weeks underwater without freezing to death? Would they be able to surface at the North Pole to rendezvous with the *Graf Zeppelin*? Would the oxygen supply hold out, and would the primitive atmospheric scrubbers keep CO2 and other organic compounds at survivable concentrations?

Nevertheless, Wilkins and his crew soldiered on with their experiments. Within the pressure chamber, they used a net to fish specimens of marine lifeforms out of the freezing ocean, curious to see what kind of creatures could endure such brutal cold. Much like Captain Nemo in Verne's book, they were especially intrigued by the jellyfish they found—graceful, serene creatures that appeared wholly unfazed by the prodding of the bizarre bipedal mammals that have ventured down into their habitat.



In his diary, Wilkins noted the displeasure of the crew: "Without exception, the others in the vessel wanted to immediately turn back." Wilkins, not keen on being remembered as a failure, ordered preparations for a dive under the ice, including a final inspection of all onboard systems. The crew was meticulous, knowing that mechanical failure would in all probability result in the death of everyone on board. One crew member donned a diving suit and conducted a final inspection of the Nautilus' exterior. When he surfaced, the news was dire: the two stern planes—instrumental in maneuvering the vessel underwater—had vanished. Mounted on either side of the propeller, they were meant to control the depth of the submarine when underwater. Without them, the already delicate operation of diving became unacceptably dangerous.

Crew members in the Nautilus galley.

Immediately, rumors of sabotage began to circulate amongst the crew. Had someone, fearing for his life, removed the stern planes so that the

Nautilus would be forced to turn back? Or were they simply torn off by drifting chunks of ice? Unsurprisingly, the prospect of a prolonged dive beneath the ice became less than enticing to sailors who were cold, wet, and trapped within a vessel that appeared to have taken every opportunity to break down. Despite this, Wilkins and Sverdrup continued with their research. They made another landmark discovery when, analyzing samples of seawater, they realized that the waters of the salt-rich Gulf Stream reached much further north than previously thought. This, in turn, was a discovery that became key in explaining the relatively mild climate of the Scandinavian countries.

On 28 August 1931 the *Nautilus* reached the pack ice at 82 degrees north. To no one's comfort, the Pole lay a further eight hundred kilometers north, and despite the missing hydroplanes, Wilkins—not wanting to disappoint Randolph Hearst—was still determined to attempt a dive. The crew steeled itself as the order was given, the ballast tanks flooded, and *Nautilus* began to sink bow-first into the freezing waters, her engines gunning full speed ahead. "The noise of ice scraping along the top of the vessel was terrifying," Wilkins reported, "It sounded as though the whole superstructure was being demolished."

Because of the missing stern planes, the first journey beneath the ice was a brief and shallow affair. While it was perhaps a less grandiose event than Wilkins had envisioned, he and his crew still became the first people ever to travel at any distance in a submarine beneath the Arctic ice cap.

Upon surfacing, the crew discovered that the ice had sheared off the radio antenna, leaving the *Nautilus* without any means by which to communicate to the outside world. The ensuing radio silence did not go unnoticed for long, and within days rumors began to circulate within American newspapers that Wilkins and his expedition had met with a disastrous end.



Wilkins, perhaps foreseeing the media frenzy brewing back on dry land, wanted to bring back evidence that the *Nautilus* has indeed dived beneath the ice. He set up a camera on an ice floe and filmed several takes as the *Nautilus* repeatedly submerged under the ice. The crew, meanwhile, finally ventured out onto the pack ice after having spent the better part of four weeks locked up in a freezing metal canister. The men set up a juryrigged radio antenna, enabling Wilkins to send a transmission to Randolph Hearst in New York. Hearst was quick to reply, urging Wilkins to abort the expedition and informing him that the *Graf Zeppelin* would not be able to make it to the rendezvous at the

North Pole. Worse still, Hearst also told Wilkins that he would be cutting all further funding for the expedition. It was dire news for Wilkins, who had invested almost all of his fortune in the expedition, and who now faced the very real possibility of personal bankruptcy, despite Lincoln Ellsworth's continued financial support. With the looming possibility of financial ruin, Wilkins finally relented and, to the great relief of the crew, decided to call off his quest to reach the North Pole. The *Nautilus* turned around and set course back to Norway.

After battering her way through a rough North Sea, the *Nautilus* finally limped back into Bergen on 20 September 1931. The crowd lining the harbor could scarcely believe what they were seeing; the rickety old submarine that left over a month ago—looking barely fit to keep the sea out—had returned, having travelled to the Arctic ice cap and back. Her final voyage through the storm-prone North Sea had inflicted irreparable damage to her engines, and the old submarine was spent. The crew radioed the U.S. Navy—still technically the owners of the *Nautilus*—with news of the vessel's safe return. After hearing what condition the Nautilus was in, the Navy wisely made the decision that she was no longer seaworthy and should therefore be scuttled.

Before the Nautilus was towed out to her final resting place, the radio operator sent one last transmission into the ether:

"Goodbye, Nautilus. With all your discomforts, there will always be a warm spot in the heart of your radio man for the first submarine to penetrate the Arctic ice."

Moments later, the *Nautilus* commenced her last dive as she was sent two hundred fathoms down to the bottom of the Byfjord, just outside Bergen. To this day, the wreck still rests lopsided in the silt, and one can just about make out the word "Nautilus" on her bow amidst the corrosion, barnacles, and encrusting marine fauna.

After the *Nautilus* expedition, Wilkins once again partnered up with Lincoln Ellsworth on several expeditions to Antarctica. In 1937 Wilkins found himself back in the Arctic regions, commanding a joint Alaskan-Canadian expedition in search of the lost Soviet flying ace Sigizmund Levanevsky. As the world plunged into the chaos of World War II, Wilkins signed on as the Arctic Consultant to the U.S. Army, a position he kept even after the wartime years.

Many years later, in 1955, the U.S. Navy received the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine, it too called the *Nautilus*. At one hundred meters in length and displacing over 3,500 tons dry, it was a true leviathan compared to Wilkins' modestly proportioned vessel. With nuclear propulsion, lengthy voyages under ice were suddenly feasible, and in 1958 the USS Nautilus embarked on Operation Sunshine, the world's first subpolar crossing.



Wilkins himself never stopped dreaming of a subpolar crossing of his own. In October 1958 he met and discussed the idea with James Calvert, commander of the nuclear submarine USS Skate. But the dream was not to be realized. On 01 December, Sir Hubert Wilkins, aged 70, unexpectedly died in a hotel room in Framingham, Massachusetts.

As a touching gesture of respect, Wilkins' ashes were brought aboard the USS Skate, which on 17 March 1959 pierced the ice and surfaced at the geographic North Pole. Commander Calvert and a number of crew members disembarked and performed a brief ceremony on the ice, during which they recited a eulogy:

Wilkins in his later years "On this day we pay tribute to one of the great men of our century. He spent his life in the noblest of callings—the attempt to broaden the horizons of the mind of man."

With those final words, the remains of Sir Hubert Wilkins were scattered across the icy wasteland, his last journey ending in the place that in life had so persistently eluded him.

written by Gustaf Hildebrand, copyright © 14 June 2016. Last updated 08 October 2016. Gustaf resides, for reasons unknown, in Sweden. He writes for Damn Interesting, has studied Information Design and likes to maintain the illusion that someday he'll be a successful science fiction author. Podcast sound design by Alan Bellows. Podcast narration by Simon Whistler. Edited by Melissa Wiley.

Sources & More Information

Ohio State University Libraries Regional Council of Goyder Modern Mechanics article American Public Television Where in time is Sir Hubert? Low Road to the Pole Submarine CO2 scrubbing systems

15 COMMENTS jamd315 Posted 14 June 2016 at 07:48 am

First?

TomS937 Posted 14 June 2016 at 08:08 am

A chilly yes. You are first.

PaulV

Posted 14 June 2016 at 08:21 am

Love these articles. Strongly prefer American accent voice actors though. The voice actor for this podcast is good at his job, it's just hard for me (a midwestern American) to follow a complex narrative through a foreign accent. Again, Mr. Whistler does a great job. It's not him, it's me.

Jeff

Posted 14 June 2016 at 02:21 pm

One minor error in the text. The bow planes of a submarine are located in the BOW and not on either side of the propeller which is in the STERN of the boat.

dangerdan

Posted 14 June 2016 at 03:57 pm

Beautiful

John Paladin

Posted 15 June 2016 at 12:43 am

Really enjoyed this one. Thanks DI

Beltrod

Posted 15 June 2016 at 07:37 pm

Thanks for a very, very enjoyable and informative piece.

Captain Stephen
Posted 15 June 2016 at 08:21 pm

Wonderful journey. As a child in my home in Greenwich Connecticut in our attic was a spring wound powered Victrola with Victor's Dog and logo "His Masters Voice". On this Victrola we would play a record of an Italian explorer (Umberto Nobile was an Italian aviator, aeronautical engineer and Arctic explorer. Nobile was a developer and promoter of semi-rigid airships during the period.) who either sailed or flew an airship into or toward the North Pole. In my memory I can still hear the sound of the wind as recorded. We played the record hundreds of times just to hear the howl of the wind.

That's when Men were very bent on hardship to obtain a Goal.

Captain Stephen

Wal Webster
Posted 16 June 2016 at 12:00 am

Thanks for another great article.

My interest in Wilkins was piqued some time ago by an inquiry I received via a website that I run for a 19th-century mountain gold-mining ghost town in the foothills of the south-east Australian Alps. A woman had written to me asking after "Susie Evans", who'd been a playmate of her grandmother and often sung with her at school concerts. She'd been told that she "married a politician and moved to Sydney", but the reality was that she'd become a Melbourne showgirl, married (and soon divorced) a man named Oscar Bennett in 1915, studied voice under Dame Nellie Melba, and sailed off for a career in opera at La Scala in Milan. She changed her goals en route, and instead became a celebrated Broadway showgirl, in which capacity she was introduced to the famous explorer, whom she eventually married at Cleveland Registry Office in late August, 1929.

Neither got in the way of the other's career all that much, and you get the impression that that arrangement suited them both quite well. She purchased the farm on which they lived in N-E Pennsylvania, and died some 16 years after her husband, in a nursing home in California, having had no children. Her ashes were *also* scattered at the North Pole, from the nuclear submarine USS Bluefish, on 4 May, 1975, as a further mark of respect by American submariners.

Wilkins was a strange man in many ways. When knighted in 1928, for example, he foreswore being called Sir **George** Hubert Wilkins, the name by which he was christened, and styled himself instead as "Sir Hubert" in a craven token of excessive deference to England's then King (South Australians can be like that sometimes). For a further and more extensive treatment of his life and times, I would recommend Simon Nasht's "The Last Explorer" (published by Hachette Australia, 2007). Reading about his earlier exploits, you will be left with the impression that his crash-through-or-crash attitude often meant that he was a very dangerous man to be standing too close to when the balloon went up.

Wilkins has been called one of the greatest undiscovered explorers of the 20th century, and one who is *especially* little known in his own home country, because of what Vilhjalmur Stefansson characterized as his "aggressive modesty". In Nasht's book, Stefansson is quoted as saying of Wilkins that "it ought to be enough to hide your light under a bushel, without threatening to knock anybody down who wants to take the bushel away."

bruce

Posted 21 June 2016 at 09:59 am

Did anyone else notice how dude looks just like Tom Hanks – In the first picture that is, in the last one he looks more like Kevin Spacey. I'm starting to sense a conspiracy – perhaps none of this ever happened, it was just staged like the moon landing;)

Marco

Posted 25 June 2016 at 12:35 am

Greatly enjoyed the read, as always, damn interesting stuff.

Fully second another reader's comments, that was a time when men were Men – nowadays, we have hashtags...

Zack

Posted 09 July 2016 at 01:01 pm

Great story! So interesting.

kurac

Posted 12 July 2016 at 09:40 am

love it!!!! more!!!

Ed

Posted 15 August 2016 at 12:02 pm

Very interesting...enjoyed reading it and gaining knowledge of submarine civilian use. Noticed one minor error...stern planes control the subs angle when diving while bow planes control the depth. Great story! Green Board, EDM

Nicholas

Posted 08 October 2016 at 11:20 am

This early and rickety contraption for sailing beneath the waves was, however, destined for greater things, as she became the first machine to take humans past—or rather, beneath—one **** the last great unexplored frontiers the Earth has to offer.

Other then that typo the article is well written.

END OF COMMENTS •

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 3:07 pm



Svetlana Roslina on her wedding day.

It is believed she was crushed to death in an industrial mixer (Picture: East2West news)

A woman has died after falling into a giant mixer that was stirring molten chocolate.

Svetlana Roslina, 24, is believed to have been crushed to death as she tried to get out of the vat at the factory in Fedortsovo, north of Moscow.

There are mixed accounts as to how she ended up in the vat with one witness saying she was emptying ingredients into the container while another said that she was trying to retrieve her mobile phone.

A local source said: 'She was minced. Only her legs were left.'

However, other people have claimed she died while emptying ingredients into the industrial mixer.



Svetlana Roslina was killed in an accident at a chocolate factory (Picture: East2West news)

Another source said: 'The girl was dragged in when she was trying to empty a sack.'

An investigation into her death is now taking place. She is survived by her husband and two children under five.

A witness who lives near the factory said they could see police cars and a hearse at the factory.

They had also heard rumours that she had dropped

her phone into the tank and was dragged under by the mixer.



Svetlana Roslina with her husband Vladimir on their wedding day (Picture: East2West news)

Svetlana Roslina with her husband Vladimir on their wedding day.

MUGSHOTS: Robin Williams, Tupac arrested in Arizona with 114 pounds of pot

12news.com

Two suspects with the names Robin Williams and Tupac were arrested for drug possession in AZ.

11:18 AM. MST December 08, 2016

PAYSON, Ariz. - Suspects by the names Robin Williams and Tupac were arrested with more than 100 pounds of marijuana during a traffic stop near Payson Sunday.

Albuquerque residents Robin Williams, 21, Tupac Crum, 19, and Erick Harris Jr., 22, were all arrested and booked into the Gila County jail on drug charges.

PHOTOS: Tupac Crum, Robin Williams, Erick Harris, Jr., arrested on drug charges in Arizona





Arizona Department of Public Safety troopers stopped a white Chevrolet pickup for a traffic violation as it was headed north on State Route 87 at milepost 250.

Troopers determined that there were "indicators of criminal activity," and a K9 officer was brought to the scene, along with a National Forest Service K9.

A search of the vehicle yielded five large plastic-

wrapped packages of marijuana in a tool box and equipment box in the bed of the truck. The marijuana inside had a street value of about \$69,000, according to Arizona DPS.

The DPS Gila/Navajo County Narcotics Unit is conducting the investigation, while Tonto Apache Reservation Police and Tonto National Forest Service Law Enforcement assisted.

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New £5 notes engraved with Jane Austen worth £50,000 circulated in Willie Wonka-style 'Golden Ticket' giveaway

peterboroughtoday.co.uk



11:0911:11Wednesday 07 December 2016

Brits are being urged to check their new fivers after engraved bank notes worth as much as £50,000 were circulated in a Willie Wonkastyle 'Golden Ticket' giveaway.

Tiny portraits of Jane Austen have been added to four of the new £5 notes by talented micro-engraver Graham Short.

The 70-year-old painstakingly carved tiny 5mm portraits of the novelist onto the polymer cash, next to the images of Sir Winston

Churchill and Big Ben.

Classic quotes from Emma, Pride and Prejudice, and Mansfield Park have also been engraved onto the Bank of England notes, which went into circulation last weekend.

The outline of the golden engraving is visible to the naked eye - but a microscope will be needed to see it properly.

Art experts are estimating that the four fivers could be worth up to £50,000 after collectors forked out thousands to buy notes with unusual serial numbers.

Graham previously hit headlines when he engraved the words of the Lord's Prayer on to the head of a pin.

And his last work - a portrait of the Queen, engraved on a speck of gold inside the eye of a needle - sold for £100,000.

Graham, from Northfield, Birmingham, said: "I'm always looking to do something different.

"When I saw the new £5 note, I thought, 'Wouldn't it be good if I could engrave something on it.

"I didn't know what at first, but then I found out that next year is going to be the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death and her image is also going to be on the new £10 note, which is coming out next year, so it ties in quite nicely with that.

"The beauty of this is that in the right light you can't see the engraving at all, but when you turn the note and the light comes at a different angle, it appears.

"I've no idea how much they will be worth if people try to sell them. But previous pieces I have worked on have been insured for more than £50,000.

"If somebody finds one I hope they will maybe put it on eBay. If they can get some extra money for Christmas I'll be thrilled."

The four notes will all be distributed across areas of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland by Thursday (8/12).

He added: "I'll probably just buy a coffee somewhere and hopefully it will find its way to somebody.

"We just wanted to spread them as far as possible and give people across the UK the chance of getting hold of one."

A fifth engraved note will be donated to the Jane Austen Society to mark the 200th anniversary of the classic novelists death next year.

Quotes and their notes:

"If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more." - Emma - Serial number: AM32 885551

"To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love." - Pride and Prejudice - Serial number: AM32 885552

"A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of." - Mansfield Park - Serial number: AM32 885553

"I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good." - Pride and Prejudice - Serial number: AM32 885554

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New Massachusetts trooper is 8-inch elf doll named 'Statie'

yahoo.com

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. (AP) — The newest member of the Massachusetts State Police is 8 inches tall and used to work for Santa Claus.

"Statie the Elf" has been appearing on the department's social media accounts all month.

It's the brainchild of Trooper Dustin Fitch, who got a custom-tailored uniform made for an "Elf on the Shelf" doll.

Statie has spent time with the motorcycle and mounted units, written reports and cleared snow from a car after a storm. He even got his driver's license at the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, but not before getting his eyes checked.

Fitch says Statie has gotten a lot of positive attention, especially from kids. He says Statie is likely to only be around for the holidays, but he has a few more things planned before Christmas.

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Newspaper: Story of child dying in Santa's arms can't be verified

By PennLive.com Follow on Twitter on December 14, 2016 at 2:27 PM, updated December 14, 2016 at 2:28 PM pennlive.com

The Tennessee newspaper that first reported the story of a Santa who said a terminally ill child had died in his arms is now reporting that it cannot verify the story is true.

The account from Santa Claus actor Eric Schmitt-Matzen was first reported in the Knoxville (Tenn.) News Sentinel, and picked up by USA Today. Many other news organizations, including PennLive, published versions of the story based on the Knoxville newspaper's account.

That account was based on an interview with Schmitt-Matzen, who said he was called to the hospital bed of a 5-year-old boy who wanted to see Santa, and that the boy died in his arms. However, he insisted that he had to protect the privacy of other people who were involved, so would not give the newspaper their names or identify the hospital.

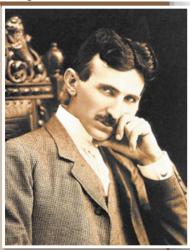
The newspaper says has been unable to confirm the account, and therefore can no longer stand by the story:

"The News Sentinel cannot establish that Schmitt-Matzen's account is inaccurate, but more importantly, ongoing reporting cannot establish that it is accurate."

Nikola Tesla Wardenclyffe Lab to Receive World Historic Site Designation

longislandpress.com

Long Island News from the Long Island Press





Nikola Tesla, left, and Wardenclyffe Laboratory and Tower in Shoreham. The tower has since been demolished, but the lab still stands. By

Rashed Mian

December 8, 2016

The Tesla Museum and Science Center at Wardenclyffe is still a year away from opening to the public but Nikola Tesla's last remaining

science lab in the world will get a much-welcomed historical recognition this weekend.

On Sunday, the American Physical Society (APS) will present a plaque declaring Wardenclyffe in Shoreham a world historic site, honoring its role in raising awareness of physics, commemorating past scientific progress, and paying homage to Tesla's incomparable achievements.

Tesla, whose groundbreaking work in the field of electricity once landed him on the cover of *Time* magazine, spent much of his career at various laboratories through the US, but the building in Wardenclyffe is the last of his labs that still stands. From there he hoped to send free electrical power to the world. But it was not to be.

The APS' plaque presentation is scheduled for 1 p.m. on Sunday. The APS is headquartered in Maryland and has an office in Ridge.

Renovations to Tesla's dilapidated lab are still in the beginning stages, said Marc Alessi, executive director of the Tesla Science Center at Wardenclyffe, a nonprofit organization that acquired the site after it was slated to be sold to developers.

The organization, which is committed to redeveloping the lab and reintroducing Tesla's work to the public, is hoping to open two buildings by January 2018, said Alessi, a former New York State Assemblyman. The Tesla Science Center raised \$850,000 three years ago to purchase the former Superfund site from Agfa Corporation.

The center is currently awaiting permits by the Town of Brookhaven, which should be approved in time for crews to begin construction next spring.

The plan is to complete the welcome center first before renovating the former administration building, which was originally designed for Tesla by the famed architect Standford White. The welcome center will be home to administrative offices, exhibits and a small space for meetings or special programs.

Given the laboratory's historic status, it will take several more years for that building to be restored. It was in total disrepair before the nonprofit stepped in to save it. The lab's iconic tower, once visible

across the Sound, has long since been demolished.

As the center begins its long-awaited reconstruction, it will continue to raise money toward the effort. To date, the organization has gotten about \$3.5 million in donations and grants. Among the contributors is Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors and rocket company SpaceX, who two years ago pledged \$1 million toward the rebuild.

Tesla's lab was designated a historic landmark by Brookhaven Town in 2014.

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No, Fisher-Price Isn't Selling A 'Happy Hour Playset'

huffingtonpost.com

"Another apple juice, barkeep."

12/08/2016 03:31 pm ET | **Updated** 2 days ago David Moye Reporter, The Huffington Post

In addition to the scourge of fake news, now we also have to worry about fake toys.

Case in point: A "Happy Hour Playset," featuring a bar, stools and fake beer bottles, that is supposedly being sold by Fisher-Price (surly barkeep not included).

Make no mistake: The product is fake and only exists in a photo posted Monday on Instagram by Adam Padilla, the owner of a New York branding agency.

Padilla was inspired by seeing his 2-year-old daughter sitting at his kitchen counter like it was a bar.

"It seemed like something someone might do," Padilla told The Huffington Post.

The photo didn't take off virally until Amiri King, a YouTube comedian based in Kentucky, posted it on Facebook with Padilla's watermark cropped out.

HuffPost reached out to King, who declined to comment.

King's post of Padilla's image has been shared more than 40,000 times, mostly by people who understand it's a joke.

But some people who believe it is real are accusing Fisher-Price of making an age-inappropriate product.

According to ABC Action News, at least one disgruntled consumer went to Facebook to gripe at Fisher-Price, saying: "Saw this and had to write. What the heck are you thinking? I hope to heaven that nobody buys this for their children it's sick."

Whoever handles the Fisher-Price social media account has to have the patience of Job.

According to NBC Connecticut, the company has responded to repeated complaints about King's image on its Facebook page by saying, "Please know that this product is not endorsed, produced or approved by Fisher-Price." (Even calling it a "product" seems like a stretch, since, again, no one has actually made one of these things.)

Padilla thinks it's hilarious that some people really believe Fisher-Price created a "Happy Hour Playset."

"The mischief maker in me is thrilled," he said.

This is actually the second Fisher-Price spoof in recent days. Over the weekend, "Saturday Night Live" presented a parody commercial for a fake line of Fisher-Price toys catering to sensitive boys, including a plastic well for staring.

The toy company has since released a statement about the recent spoof products:

In the last few weeks some comical, yet fictional, Fisher-Price products have been introduced — perhaps the result of adult writers, designers and comedians that were Fisher-Price kids themselves. As a premiere childhood development company focused on helping families get the best possible start in life, we take our role in developing toys and products very seriously, but can appreciate the recent product-development suggestions as obvious love of the brand.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story incorrectly attributed Padilla's image to King. In fact, King only reposted Padilla's image on Facebook. This article has been updated with Padilla's comments.

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Ohio man's controversial 'Zombie Nativity' vandalized

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 7, 2016

Asso

Pres CINCINNATI (AP) — A suburban Cincinnati man says someone vandalized the "Zombie Nativity" scene he puts up annually, beheading the ghoulish-looking Mary figure and flipping the greenish baby Jesus into the yard.

Jasen Dixon says someone damaged the handmade scene early Tuesday at his home in Sycamore Township, northeast of Cincinnati. He has since repaired the scene and says he'll keep rebuilding it if necessary.

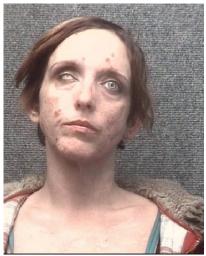
Dixon tells WCPO-TV it's the first time someone has intentionally damaged the structure since he started the holiday display in 2014.

But it's been a topic of controversy previously. The township took Dixon to court last year for alleged zoning violations because of the structure over the nontraditional nativity scene, but it eventually dropped the case.

Dixon's attorney argued the township was trying to suppress his freedoms.

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Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.ukFriday 9 Dec 2016 11:58 am



One-eyed prostitute among 11 arrested in brothel drugs sting

Tiffany Dawn Evans, 30, was charged with prostitution, drugs and unlawful to advertise for sale, manufacture or possess (Picture: Myrtle Beach Jail)

A one-eyed prostitute was among 11 people arrested for allegedly being involved in a prostitution ring in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Tiffany Dawn Evans, 30, appeared in her mugshot with only one eye after she was arrested near the tourist waterside resorts off South Kings Highway.

She was among 11 others arrested on Wednesday and charged with prostitution and drugs charges.







arrest1.jpg







Daniel Quardre Bryant, 23, Desiree Dawn Mcgill, 35, and Jules Roy Hixenbaugh, 56.

Evans was charged with prostitution, drugs and unlawful to advertise for sale, manufacture or possess.

Police busted the group during an undercover prostitution operation in the area.

Michelle Renee Rowan, 24, John Henry Brown, 58, and Christy Lynn Patterson, 32. Gary Lewis Clark, 58, Jose Juan Cruz-toribo, 32, and Amisha Nichole Eller, 28.

It follows another large-scale prostitution bust at Myrtle Beach just last week, when police arrested 10 other women, aged between 25 and 54 years.

Lt. Joey Crosby, a Myrtle Beach

police spokesman, said they are continuing to address prostitution in the area as it was a crime that could lead to other criminal activity.





Those arrested include: Daniel Quardre Bryant, 23, Christy Michelle Renee Rowan, 24, Ashley Janay Pearl, 25, Amisha Nichole Eller, 28, Tiffany Dawn Evans, 30, Lynn Patterson, 32, Jose Juan Cruz-toribo, 32, Desiree Dawn Mcgill, 35, Jules Roy Hixenbaugh, 56, Gary Lewis Clark, 58 and John Henry Brown, 58.

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Ones, zeroes stolen off addresses on homes are returned

yahoo.com

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Scores of ones and zeroes stolen from addresses mounted on the homes of Philadelphia residents have been returned.

The news website Billy Penn reports that a white trash bag containing 83 metal address markers was left Monday night at the east Kensington home of Meghan Haley.

Haley earlier released surveillance footage of a man and woman going around the neighborhood in September ripping zeroes and ones off the front of homes.

She says she doesn't know whether the bag containing 56 ones and 27 zeroes was returned by the thieves or by a good Samaritan who found the numbers.

But then, she and other neighbors don't know why the numbers were taken — though they suspected that it may have been for some kind of art installation.

Open the Door and Let Us In: Mummers at Midwinter - #FolkloreThursday

folklorethursday.com

http://folklorethursday.com/folklife/open-the-door-and-let-us-in-mummers-at-midwinter/



#FolkloreThursday

Public folklore in action



Open the Door and Let Us In: Mummers at Midwinter

The appearance of a Turkish knight, Beelzebub, and a horse's skull mark out a centuries old winter tradition in rural communities across Britain.

"Now winter it is coming on, dark, dirty wet and cold.

And for to try your good nature, this night we do make bold,

This night we do make bold, with your ha'penny and strong beer,

And we'll come no more a-souling until another year."

These words, heard being sung outside the door of a Cheshire pub, are a clue that a bunch of mummers are about to burst in and perform a soul-caking play. Mummers plays were a common winter tradition, often performed around Christmas, and this was particularly the case in the counties of Somerset, Dorset, and Shropshire for instance. In these areas we might find Father Christmas being one of the characters of the play, though quite different in nature to the Santa of today. The Galoshins plays of Scotland tend to be performed from end of October to the start of January. Elsewhere, the plays might be performed at different times in the year, for example, North Yorkshire do plays around Plough Monday, Lancashire have them around Easter and are called Pace Egg plays accordingly. In my native Cheshire we do them around All Souls Day, 2nd November, and so they are called Soul Caking plays. For those of us who take part in the plays, it marks the start of winter.

Soulcakers from Helsby, Cheshire, in the 1920s. After the Great War, the roles tended to be played by teenage boys rather than men. From historic postcard owned by Jones' Ale Soul Cakers, via Tom Hughes, out of copyright.

The 'cakes' part of the play's name comes from the soul cakes which were once eaten in memory of those that had died in the previous year, a Cheshire tradition. The origin of this is unclear but may be connected in some way with the tradition of the sin eater, to which there are a few references, just over the border in Shropshire. That was where someone would eat a cake over the corpse at



the wake and thereby take on the sins of the deceased thereby helping their soul through purgatory. The soul cakes of Cheshire were a similar idea, but just annual, rather than when someone died. In some places souling was just the singing at doors and receiving the cakes and ale, a bit like carolling or wassailing, but in other places the play was done.

I've been performing in these plays for 20 years now, taking over from my dad, in what appears to be the traditional way these

things were passed on. Our group, Jones' Ale Soul Cakers dates back to 1970, being part of the folk revival. The whole idea of this type of mumming only goes back to the 1740s, though older folklore books tend to state that the plays are an ancient tradition, pre-Christian, connected with fertility and all the usual clichés, but there are chap books from the 1740s with the essence of the play in, and the earlier surviving notations of mummers plays are closer to that text than the later versions.

The essence of the play is that the hero, St George in our version, challenges various opponents to fight, defeating them all and killing the last. He then calls for a doctor to restore him to life. There's a lot of opportunity for slapstick at this point and the doctor also boasts of his skills in much the same way as the mid-18th century quacks and mountebanks, which again points to the origin date for these plays. The cure in our play is 'alec and plain' which is clearly the cure-all sold in marketplaces of the Georgian era – elecampane. After the revival of the dead soldier, a few other characters enter, but aren't connected to the main action of the play. These include two characters which are in all the Cheshire plays but much less common outside the county, Beelzebub and the Wild Horse, or as he's called in our version, Young Ball.

In Cheshire, the tradition is that if you don't have the horse, you can't make a collection. There were once fights between rival groups of soul cakers, known as 'souling gangs' and sometimes the horse's skull would be stolen. We're on to our third skull for Jones' Ale, though this one has survived since 1990. This part of the play might have crept across the border from the Welsh mari lwyd tradition, it's very similar. There is something about carrying a skeletal horse through the darkened streets which is particularly suited to the long nights of winter. Historically the tradition was to collect soul cakes and ale from the larger houses. These days, mummers tend to perform in pubs and collect cash for charities. In recent years the Jones' Ale Soul Cakers of Cheshire have collected for Chester Food Banks.

Young Ball, the horse used by Jones' Ale Soul Cakers. The performer carries the horses skull and has a limited view from beneath the cape © Tom Hughes

The Alderley play that we use is the oldest surviving example from Cheshire, being recorded as performed "prior to 1788" and is notable as being the only Cheshire example which didn't take place in November, but rather at Christmas. Originally, it was performed as part of the festive entertainments for the Stanley family who were the big landowners in Alderley. All the performers were from the Barber family, this was the case from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. Today's Alderley Mummers, revived in the late 1970s, go out around Christmas like their



predecessors. In recent years, our Jones' Ale group have also begun to perform over the festive period to satisfy a need for some real tradition as an antidote to the modern commercial Christmas.

A Christmas mummers' play is described at length in Thomas Hardy's 1878 novel *The Return of the Native*:

At this moment the fiddles finished off with a screech, and the serpent emitted a last note that nearly lifted the roof. When, from the comparative quiet within, the mummers judged that the dancers had taken their seats, Father Christmas advanced, lifted the latch, and put his head inside the door.

"Ah, the mummers, the mummers!" cried several guests at once.

"Clear a space for the mummers."

Humpbacked Father Christmas then made a complete entry, swinging his huge club, and in a general way clearing the stage for the actors proper, while he informed the company in smart verse that he was come, welcome or welcome not; concluding his speech with

"Make room, make room, my gallant boys,

And give us space to rhyme;

We've come to show Saint George's play,

Upon this Christmas time."

There are now around half a dozen souling gangs surviving in Cheshire, they were once much more common. It seems that many large villages had a gang until the start of the 20th century. Most of today's groups have arrived in the folk revival of the 1960s-70s, though Antrobus Soulcakers are claimed to be an uninterrupted tradition since the late 19th century.

Having seen the others, our style of performance in Jones' Ale Soul Cakers is quite different in a couple of ways. Firstly it's a lot livelier, most of the other groups more or less declaim their lines in a near monotone which might well be more in line with the tradition. My friend Alan Garner reckons that you know when something is a real tradition as those carrying it out do it as if a mundane occurrence, whereas those who have revived them do it with great show and spectacle. I think there's something in that, but it doesn't stop us. We work the pub crowd into it, and there's a lot of interaction between the audience and performers. This makes our show a lot longer, more like 20 minutes in length, rather than the 2-3 minutes which you might see with Warburton Soulers. All are equally valid of course, but it definitely seems as if today's audience prefer our version!

Some of the costumes in our play are a bit different too. A couple of years ago, Beelzebub changed from the original costume used since 1970, looking like a sort of 18th century stage devil, to a bank director in suit, but with a partially unzipped face revealing red skin, red eye and horn on one side. He still carries a frying pan and club of course. Our horse is also different to all the others in Cheshire where they bend over and hold the horses head in front, similar in style to a pantomime horse. Apparently the Jones' Ale horse started out like that, but in the 1980s the Chester Gateway Theatre borrowed it for a show and when it came back there was a whole new frame so that it sits

on your shoulders and stands up to about 8-9 feet high, with a decorated cloak hiding the person carrying it, very much like a Mari Lwyd seen in Welsh celebrations at New Year.

So long as these traditions evolve, they will be able to survive and find their place our changing world. Whilst these annual outbursts of mummers' plays endure they will entertain audiences; enough of the old mischief and mystery remains to keep our folk culture thriving. The exploits of St George, the Quack Doctor and companions help to brighten up long winter nights and mark out the turning of the year.

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Harley Tamplin for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 10:33 am



And it's glorious (Picture: Facebook/Phelan MoonSong)

A pagan priest is celebrating being given permission to wear his religious headgear in his new driving license photo.

Phelan MoonSong's brand new license features a picture of him sporting his huge horns, which he wears for religious reasons.

Mr MoonSong, who changed his name in June, was initially turned down by the the Bangor Bureau of Motor Vehicles in Maine when he applied for the right to wear his horns in the picture.

But after visiting another centre in Portland, Maine, he explained his religious beliefs and won his battle, the Bangor Daily News reported.

He wrote on Facebook: 'I won. Picture with horns allowed and being retaken.'



Mr MoonSong was delighted to win his battle (Picture: Facebook/Phelan MoonSong)

He told the Bangor Daily News: 'I have used it publicly as my name (except in legal matters) since 2007 when I was initiated in a Coven.'

But he did not have any ID with his new name, leading him to apply for a new driving license.

A photo was taken by the department in Maine, who later rejected his application.

Firefighters put on protective clothing to catch erection spider

Letter to couple 'somewhere near the sea in Suffolk' arrives

Mr MoonSong told WGME-TV: 'I think they tried to think they needed to have a more stringent rule or reason why my spirituality or my religion was a proper one.

'That's not really required, just a strong belief to start any church or religion.'

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators says religious headgear cannot obstruct the person's face in a license photo.

Philippines' Duterte admits personally killing suspects - BBC News

bbc.com

- 14 December 2016
- From the section Asia

Media captionPhilippines' President Rodrigo Duterte: "I was looking for an encounter so I could kill"

Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte has admitted he personally killed criminal suspects as mayor of Davao.

It is the first such admission he has made since becoming president in June, but echoes comments he made in 2015.

He ran the southern city for two decades, earning a reputation for cutting crime, and criticism for allegedly supporting death squads.

Mr Duterte was speaking to business leaders at the presidential palace on Monday, before an overseas trip.

It is the latest in a series of controversial and sometimes contradictory comments by Mr Duterte.

'Blood on his hands'

"In Davao I used to do it personally. Just to show to the guys [police] that if I can do it why can't you," he said.

"And I'd go around in Davao with a motorcycle, with a big bike around, and I would just patrol the streets, looking for trouble also. I was really looking for a confrontation so I could kill."

In 2015, he admitted killing at least three men suspected of kidnapping and rape in Davao.

The comments have been condemned by human rights group Amnesty International, which has called on him to put an immediate end to the killings.

"The climate of impunity in the Philippines has intensified even further since President Duterte began his brutal crackdown on suspected drug users and dealers in July, with a wave of unlawful killings claiming more than 5,000 lives across the country," said Rafendi Djamin, the group's director for South East Asia and the Pacific.

"By boasting about the blood on his own hands, President Duterte will further embolden police and vigilantes to blatantly violate laws and carry out more extrajudicial executions without fear of being held to account."

Image caption Mr Duterte made the speech before leaving the country for visits to Cambodia and Singapore

But just hours before Mr Duterte's latest remarks, he insisted "I am not a killer", in a speech for The Outstanding Filipino Awards 2016. He has also previously both acknowledged and denied being involved with death squads.

In September a Senate inquiry heard testimony from a self-confessed former death squad member that Mr Duterte had, while serving as Davao mayor, shot dead a justice department agent with an Uzi submachine gun.

Nearly 6,000 people are said to have been killed by police, vigilantes and mercenaries since Mr Duterte launched his drug war after being elected in May. He has expressed few regrets about the policy, once saying: "Hitler massacred three million Jews... There's three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them."

Mr Duterte has repeatedly said he does not care about human rights and has suggested that lawyers defending drug suspects might also be targeted in his campaign, says the BBC's Jonathan Head.

Some human rights lawyers believe the outspoken president's open support for a shoot-to-kill policy by the police could make him vulnerable to prosecution for crimes against humanity at the international court.

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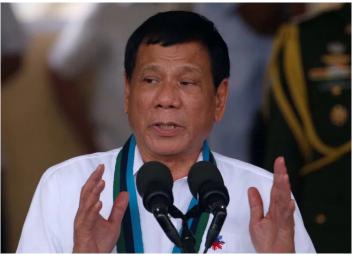
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Philippines president tells people to deal with his mass killings by 'opening more funeral homes'

metro.co.uk

Jimmy Nsubuga for Metro.co.ukFriday 9 Dec 2016 8:44 pm

WARNING: GRAPHIC IMAGES



Philippines president tells people to deal with his mass killings by 'opening more funeral homes'

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (Picture: Reuters)

Shocking images of morgues in the Philippines have shown the scale of the president's war on drugs.

Rodrigo Duterte promised to fill funeral parlours with the bodies of drug dealers – and it looks like that's exactly what he's doing.

Images showed some of the 2,004 people that have been killed by officers in 'self-defence' during anti-drug operations since the president took office on July 1.

Another 3,060 killings have been classified as 'under investigation'.

'I'll supply the dead bodies', President Duterte said while urging people to build more funeral parlours.



Embalmer Alejandro Ormeneta getting formalin from a drum (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)

Decomposed bodies (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)

He has been criticised for his disturbing stance by both the public and politicians.

'This shouldn't happen, they are people, not animals,' said undertaker Alejandro Ormeneta after he recounted how he had to remove three nails from a dead person's head.

He added: 'I think he was still alive when they hammered the nails. They tied him up first, put tape around his head, then hammered the nails in... that must have been so painful. I felt so sorry for him.'

The body of an alleged drug dealer (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)

Philippine senators have criticised the way the president is carrying out his anti-narcotics campaign, saying it should be done within the bounds of the law and he must punish police officers who







commit crimes.

Another image of a decomposed body (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)
The sister of the alleged drug dealer who was gunned down by unidentified men inside his house (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)
Embalmer Alejandro Ormeneta preparing embalming instruments (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)

They said while they had found no clear proof the rising number of extrajudicial killings were state-sponsored but told Duterte to observe due process and give the accused their day in court.

Duterte has denied the police are conducting extrajudicial killings.

He won a May election on a promise to wipe out drugs and dealers.

Workers burying bodies in various stages of decomposition (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)



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Pigeon spies and bustard pawns: In Pakistan, even birds get caught up in international intrigue

| December 11, 2016 | Last Updated: Dec 11 7:34 PM ET

nationalpost.com

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — If any further proof were needed that geopolitical intrigue can stalk the humblest of Pakistan's inhabitants, consider the recent cases of two Pakistani birds.

The first is a pigeon, a species that people all over the country raise on their rooftops as a simple, inexpensive pleasure and a brief escape from their daily struggles with poverty, corruption and clogged streets below.

Some weeks ago, tensions were running especially high between Pakistan and its perennial next-door rival India. The source was Kashmir, the disputed border region where Muslim protesters had been blinded with pellet guns and Indian soldiers had been burned to death in a late-night attack by insurgents.

Into the fog of belligerent rhetoric between the two nuclear powers wandered a white pigeon, which was caught and caged by Indian security forces in a border district adjoining Kashmir.

I realize I am sticking my neck out but would the Indian authorities please set the poor captive pigeon free?

According to Indian news agencies, the bird was suspected of having "Pakistani links" and was carrying a warning message for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The arresting officer posed with his feathered prisoner, and the image soon circulated on social media.

Around the same time, Indian authorities in Kashmir said that they had also discovered 150 dehydrated pigeons stuffed into a car and that they suspected the birds had been smuggled for purposes of espionage. An official was quoted as saying the pigeons had suspicious multicoloured rings attached to their feet. All were turned over to an animal welfare agency while police investigated the case.

Irfan Husain, a columnist for Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, suggested that the avian seizures were a sign that India remains "a deeply insecure country" despite its large size, rapidly growing economy and military might. "I realize I am sticking my neck out," he wrote, "but would the Indian authorities please set the poor captive pigeon free?"

No such outcry has yet been raised about the potential plight of another Pakistani bird, the houbara bustard, a grey-speckled, pheasantlike creature mostly found in North Africa. In Pakistan, this rare variety of bustard is considered an endangered species, and hunting it is banned in some regions.

This past week, the bustard too ran afoul of international politics, this time at the hands of Pakistan's friends. Parties of Middle Eastern royals often bring trained falcons to hunt smaller birds in Pakistan's northern mountains and southern deserts. For years, among their favourite targets have been bustards.

Last year, wildlife groups petitioned Pakistani courts to ban bustard-hunting, and the Supreme Court granted their request. But the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appealed, arguing it had "adversely affected the country's diplomatic ties with the Middle Eastern countries" and noting that hunts by "foreign dignitaries also bring in considerable funds."



KARIM SAHIB/AFP/Getty Images A falcon, right, tries to catch a houbara bustard during a falconry competition in Hameem in 2014.

One of the Sharif government's closest allies is Qatar, and last month, a Qatari prince came to the prime minister's rescue in a corruption case before the Supreme Court, where political opponents have accused him of hiding assets abroad, including a group of luxury apartments in London.

Sharif, who has vowed to resign if found guilty, said he had broken no laws but was struggling to explain how his family had acquired the apartments without a money trail or tax bill. Suddenly, the Qatari prince provided a letter stating that his family had given them to the Sharifs as part of an old business settlement.

This week, a Qatari prince from the same family was issued a special permit to hunt 100 bustards in northwestern Khyber-Paktunkhwa province. According to Dawn, the province's wildlife conservator objected, saying it was a protected species. The matter has not been resolved, but the paper reported that another Qatari royal had recently "faced some resistance" while attempting to hunt bustards in Balochistan province.

"He immediately called the prime minister on the phone," Dawn reported Sunday, "and things were sorted out."

Pittsburgh cites itself for ownership of run-down property

yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The city of Pittsburgh has cited itself for owning run-down properties and a local judge isn't letting the city withdraw some citations, which officials say were mistakenly filed.

The city's Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections has ramped up citations against owners of eyesore properties, in hopes landlords will repair them.

PLI Director Maura Kennedy says the eight citations were filed by mistake. District Judge Richard King has allowed the city to withdraw five citations, but says the city must deal with the others because property owners often complain about the condition of city-owned properties when they get cited for not maintaining theirs.

Mayor's spokesman Tim McNulty says the city doesn't have enough money to maintain more than 6,000 derelict properties it owns and won't tear down some because of their architectural significance.

Police officer charged with slapping man dressed as bunny

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 6, 2016

Asso

Pres HOPATCONG, N.J. (AP) — A police officer accused of slapping a man who was wearing a bunny costume and was blowing an air horn inside a police station has been charged with assault.

Hopatcong police Officer Nicholas Maresca Jr. was charged on Friday with slapping Kevin Hemmerich on Nov. 17. He faces one count of simple assault.

The encounter between Maresca and Hemmerich was captured on a video shot by Hemmerich's brother. The video shows Hemmerich entering the Hopatcong police station and blowing the air horn repeatedly despite being told to stop.

Kevin Hemmerich's brother, Jason Hemmerich, said two officers began cursing at them and one hit Kevin Hemmerich in the face.

Maresca's attorney, Anthony Iacullo, told NJ.com (http://bit.ly/2g1PgSI) that Maresca "acted appropriately and in accordance with his training and experience as a police officer." He said Maresca would be vindicated.

Jason Hemmerich said his brother went to the police station to turn himself in on a warrant related to a motor vehicle accident. Kevin Hemmerich faced an arrest warrant for not completing a work program that was in lieu of jail time for failing to have car insurance.

Maresca has been placed on administrative duty, prosecutors said.

Information from: NJ Advance Media.



This photo provided by Ephrata Police Department shows Jonathan Michael Steffy. The Ephrata, Pa., Police Department posted on its Facebook page that officers were searching for a Steffy last Nov. 2016 over an outstanding bench warrant. They found the 23-year-old in a backyard but he fled. As they searched the area, one officer noticed a black cat in a nearby yard staring intently at a shed. The officer opened it and found the suspect. (Ephrata Police Department via AP)

EPHRATA, Pa. (AP) — A Pennsylvania police department says a black cat was lucky for one of its officers tracking down a fugitive.

The Ephrata Police Department posted on its Facebook page that officers were searching for Jonathan Michael Steffy last month over an

outstanding bench warrant.

They found the 23-year-old in a backyard but he fled. As they searched the area, one officer noticed a black cat in a nearby yard staring intently at a shed. The officer checked that shed, but it was empty. The officer again saw the cat, and it became apparent it was staring at a different shed behind the officer.

The officer opened that shed and found Steffy.

Police say their thankful for any crime-fighting help, "whether human or feline!"

It wasn't clear if Steffy has an attorney.

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"Chocolate is a Fighting Food!" - Chocolate bars in the Second World War

By intern Sean Jacobson, October 24, 2016

si.edu



Smithsonian National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center



Conservation of the Star-Spangled Banner is made possible through donations like yours.

questions I ask museum visitors during a chocolate program I lead in the museum's Wallace H. Coulter Performance Plaza. Nearly every time, the response is unanimous: "Of course!" Most of us don't see chocolate as more than a delicious (and often addictive) candy we love to eat, especially around Halloween and Valentine's Day. Many people are surprised, then, when I show them how chocolate has had many other uses besides being a confection.

"Do you like chocolate?" That's one of the first

Our interactive program on chocolate history, The Business of Chocolate: From Bean to Drink, helps visitors understand how people made chocolate in

the 18th century as well as chocolate's historical roles in American business and society. In particular, I love talking with visitors about chocolate's use in military rations, both because it's a story I first heard from my grandfather and because it's a topic I was able to research during my internship.

My grandfather, Harlan Thomas Kennedy, a veteran of World War II, used to share memories of eating chocolate on the battlefront. Growing up in a poor mining family in western Kentucky during the

Great Depression, my grandfather hardly had much chocolate until his time in the army. While in the 82nd Airborne Division fighting in Belgium and the Netherlands during Operation Market Garden, he received field rations, a most spartan variant being the K-ration. These rations each included a chocolate bar!

My grandfather's fondness for the rationed chocolate bars was so great that he would even trade cigarettes for more chocolate. These chocolate bars certainly served as a morale boost when on the front, where resources had to be limited.







Of all foods, why chocolate?
Because of its caffeine and high calorie content, it was a reliable source of energy for soldiers on the front. Chocolate consumption among Americans dates back to colonial times

—George Washington and the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War would have consumed chocolate as a hot beverage, for example. By World War II chocolate had become a staple of military rations.

In fact, the U.S. War Department collaborated with chocolate manufacturers to produce Ration D bars, especially suitable for extreme temperatures sometimes encountered on the front. A mixture of chocolate, sugar, powdered milk, oat flour, and vitamins provided 600 calories per serving and made a very effective survival food.



It surprises me that my grandpa enjoyed the bars so much, as they were designed more for sustenance than for taste. They were to be eaten slowly to supply maximum energy. The Ration D bars were intended to "taste a little better than a boiled potato," according to U.S. Army Quartermaster Paul Logan in a 1937 correspondence with Hershey's, and many other soldiers apparently disliked the bar since it was mostly bitter and extremely dense. I suppose if the bars were too tasty, they would've been eaten too quickly!



Due to the amount of chocolate the War Department and the Red Cross sent to soldiers abroad, chocolate on the home front was very limited. Many magazine advertisements asked civilians for wartime cooperation and understanding, as

chocolate became an integral part in the war effort. Could you imagine if chocolate were rationed

today?



As with many other products, chocolate's wartime production helped it develop into a mass consumer food in the decades after the war. If you are interested in learning more about chocolate's military legacy, you should check out the M&M's story, currently on display in the *American Enterprise* exhibition. M&M's were first introduced to World War II soldiers as a sugar-coated chocolate candy that didn't melt in your hands.



Listening to my grandfather's wartime memories of chocolate helped me realize how small things in our lives connect to bigger movements, ideas, and events. Have you talked with your family members or friends about the role of special foods like chocolate in their lives?

Sean Jacobson completed an internship in the Department of Visitor Services. He is a recent graduate of Western Kentucky University, where he majored in History and Broadcasting. The Business of Chocolate: From Bean to Drink is a free daytime program. Check our calendar for upcoming dates.

'All I asked for was sliced cheese': Men bewildered after store employees hide, call the police

news10.com



OEKIIMISETEO -

ABLE RICHMOND, Va. (WRIC) — What began as a spontaneous trip to the store ended up being one of the

WRICPublished: November 26, 2016, 1:35 pm



cheese-man

most bizarre experiences of Ricky Berry's life. He and his roommate went to purchase a grocery item and ended up having the police called on them.

Berry and his roomate told WRIC they walked into the CVS in Carytown and asked an employee if they sold sliced cheese. The worker kindly replied that they did not.

A few minutes later, the employee

— all of the store employees, in fact — were nowhere to be found. Berry and his roommate, Philip Blackwell, said they were in the store with another customer for more than 30 minutes alone before an officer with the Richmond Police Department showed up.

"We looked around for probably 30, 45 minutes and we couldn't find anybody," Blackwell said.

As for the third customer who was as confused as the two roommates, Berry said, "he was in the store before we were actually. He had a bad tooth, all he wanted was some Orajel. That's all he needed."

"We were walking around trying to find an employee, and the cop himself ended up opening up the emergency door, which set the alarm off," Berry explained. "A couple of minutes later, he got the call from the alarm company asking what was going on."

So the officer joined in on the search for the missing employees. Berry recorded a video on his Snapchat account of what happened next.

"He was laughing with us because, like, this is how weird, apocalyptic movies start," Berry said.

Eventually, the employees were found in the back of the store hiding in a locked room. After making a few calls, the officer told the customers they had to leave.

In one of the videos he recorded, Berry said, "We're being kicked out because they were scared of us and hiding."

"He just told us that we need to leave premises or else we would be arrested for trespassing and that flipped the script on all of us," Berry told WRIC Reporter Jonathan Costen. "We had no idea what was going on."

Berry said the officer was kind and was just doing what he was told to do.

Multiple attempts to contact the store manager were denied, although a CVS spokesperson apologized and said the employee who called the police will be interviewed and possibly retrained.

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'It rattles the pictures on my wall': Mysterious Windsor Hum is getting louder and more frequent

November 26, 2016 10:28 AM ET

nationalpost.com



Gary Grosse calls it part of the change in seasons.

The globally recognized Windsor Hum has seemingly ramped up again in noise and frequency, driving residents on the city's west end and LaSalle crazy at all hours of the day or night.

"Last night was a really good rattle," said Grosse, who helps oversee the Windsor-Essex County Hum Facebook group.

"It almost sounds like a hammering. It's obviously starting to peak."

Despite repeated calls for action, Grosse of late is almost resigned to Windsorites being forced to live with the Hum given how its source is alleged to be the U.S. Steel Corp. on Zug Island across the border.

"I can tell you I hear it in my house and it rattles the pictures on my wall," he said. "We as Canadians need the government to advocate on our behalf. We can't march over there.

"There needs to be engagement from the U.S. side. I hate to be gloom and doom, but I don't think it's going to get better unless that complex closes up."

Another west-end resident, Mike Provost, daily tracks noise levels and vibrations largely related to the Hum.

It's the pounding — like someone taking a rubber mallet to your house

"It's a lot more frequent lately," he said. "It even seems louder at times. I understand things have to happen as part of the industry. But at four in the morning it's not a lot of fun.

"It's the pounding — like someone taking a rubber mallet to your house."

On top of that are pressure releases and repetitive train horn sounds, Provost said.

"I don't know why it all happens at four in the morning," he said. "This morning was a little rough. It's a lot of the same noise we have always heard — just more frequent."

Provost wants more outside research to pinpoint the exact cause, but local residents don't have that kind of money to spend, he said.

"There has got to be a way to stop this," he said. "Elected officials at every level are responsible for our well-being. It's been documented that low-frequency noise is dangerous for people."

NDP — Windsor West MP Brian Masse said his office has not received a noticeable increase of complaints about the Hum, but guessed many residents may simply be resigned to putting up with the noise.

Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for addressing the situation since it is a cross-border issue.

"We continued to advocate over the summer and fall," Masse said. "We have written to the minister (Stephane Dion), but haven't seen any action. There seems to be no political will."

The federal government did pay for a study which indicated a couple years ago the source of the Hum was likely Zug Island, but made no definitive conclusions.

We will press and watch — and press again when other issues with the U.S. are being raised

Masse would like to see the issue raised by the federal government whenever cross-border discussions on issues occur with the U.S.

"This is not going away and has received international attention," he said. "It's known as the Windsor Hum, but it's quite clear that it emanates from the Detroit area. We will press and watch — and press again when other issues with the U.S. are being raised."

The steel company has long been cited as one of the top air polluters in the U.S. midwest, but never acknowledged being the cause of the Hum.

But one hopeful sign occurred this week.

The repairs the steel mill agreed to undertake include replacing a cracked, pollution-emitting bell top on a blast furnace used for making molten iron at its Zug Island facility, the newspaper said.

The actions are expected to reduce harmful emissions, but it is not clear whether it will make a difference on noise.

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Sunday, November 27, 2016

Las Vegas Review-Journal

Mortgage rates surge, but...

Posted November 26, 2016 - 11:43pmUpdated November 27, 2016 - 6:25am





By ELI SEGALLLAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Carol and Myles
Catania were living in a
hotel, having been
evicted from their
suburban Las Vegas
house, when they got a
call from someone
named Tom. He didn't
give his last name and
wouldn't say where he
worked, but he offered











them a sliver of good news: They could come back for their stuff.

When they drove up, however, the bank-owned home was getting tossed. Strangers were throwing their belongings into trash bags, and one man told a laborer that once they got the safes open, he could take

what he wanted.

A few days later, a man named Thomas Benson sued for the property. And several weeks after that, he said police and federal agents raided his house with semi-automatic rifles.

Benson is a purported "sovereign citizen," or a follower of anti-government ideology whose adherents are known for financial scams, nonsensical writings and occasional violence. He has said in court papers that he's "not a person" and showed his "proof of life" with blue footprints, though he's also been charged at least twice in Clark County over fraudulent checks.

His saga offers a glimpse at the bizarre and often criminal world of sovereign citizens and shows how Las Vegas, despite the improved housing market, still grapples with a dark, lingering side effect of the recession: squatters and others targeting vacant homes.

The Review-Journal did not find accusations that Benson moved into the Catanias' former home, a 2-acre spread with a guest house and a roughly 5,400-square-foot main house off Ann Road and the 215 Beltway. But people apparently had taken over the northwest valley property around the time he sued. Wooden barricades blocked part of the driveway, and a No Trespassing sign out front had the name and phone number of Benson's partner in the lawsuit.

Sovereign citizens aren't new to Las Vegas and are involved with squatter homes around the country. They file bogus deeds for vacant properties, change the locks and "rent" them out, said Mark Pitcavage, a senior research fellow at the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism.

Las Vegas has grappled with a widespread squatter problem the past few years, enabled by the valley's thousands of vacant homes and growing use of fake leases. But locally, sovereigns' involvement in these scams appears rare.

Las Vegas police Lt. Nick Farese of the Northwest Area Command, which in recent years had the most squatter calls in the Metropolitan Police Department, said sovereigns are "relatively new" here when it comes to squatter homes and aren't "superprevalent."

"This is obviously the biggest one I'm involved with thus far," he said.

Henderson and North Las Vegas police said they hadn't come across sovereigns when dealing with squatter homes.

"I can only imagine what a cluster that's going to turn out to be," said Officer Scott Vaughn, who heads the North Las Vegas police department's squatter enforcement.

'NO DOUBT'

Benson has denied Metro's accusation that he follows sovereign ideology, but Pitcavage looked at some court filings by Benson that the Review-Journal sent him and thought otherwise.

"Oh, please," Pitcavage said. "There's no doubt he's a sovereign citizen."

Metro declined to comment on details of Benson's case, including the raid, citing an open investigation and litigation, as Benson sued the department this year over a traffic stop.

The U.S. Treasury Department did not respond to a request for comment on Benson's claim that its agents took part in the raid. The FBI's Las Vegas office declined to comment on his claim that FBI agents participated, and the Nevada Attorney General's Office, which prosecutes real estate fraud, declined comment altogether.

When the Review-Journal initially called Benson for comment, he said, "I'm not sure what you're talking about," and hung up before the R-J could question him on the sovereign citizen accusations. A second attempt to reach him weeks later was unsuccessful.

It's unclear what the 55-year-old Benson does for a living. He claimed in court papers two years ago that he was a "business assistant' for a foundation that doesn't appear to exist and said this summer that he sells a coffee product.

He's also been accused of offering "legal kits" to help people stall evictions. And after Benson allegedly wrote a bogus \$18,000 check, his accused accomplice told a detective that he had met Benson at a financial seminar where Benson was a "key speaker," court records say.

At least one thing seems certain: Benson left stacks of bizarre court papers in his wake in recent years.

- A filing in the check case said Benson was an "official carriage registered under the universal post office" and authorized to carry "sacred cargo beyond the sea."
- He filed in Kansas federal court an "Ecclesiastical Deed Poll" that said he is "living flesh and blood, sentient man." The filing included a page with footprints and thumbprints in blue ink labeled "Proof of Life Footprints of the Living Man on the Land Known as thomas arvel benson."
- He incorporated a business in Missouri called THOMAS ARVEL BENSON and filed a \$499,999,999.99 lien against it.

■ His filings have featured red thumbprints, crests or coats of arms and a copy of the Declaration of Independence that appears to include the signature of one "thomas arvel benson" not far from John Hancock's.

Metro has accused Benson more than once of being a sovereign. A detective investigating the \$18,000 check reported in 2013 that he recognized Benson from "several other investigations" and that Benson "is believed to subscribe" to sovereign ideology.

The case was later dismissed, apparently in a deal that led to a guilty plea in another check case, court records indicate. He received probation and a suspended prison sentence in that one.

Meanwhile, after Benson sued Metro in June over the traffic stop – he alleged, among other things, kidnapping, and sought \$12 million "payable in silver dollars" – attorneys said in court papers that he "espouses" sovereign beliefs. The lawsuit was poised to be dismissed, records show.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks U.S. hate groups, says sovereign citizens hold "truly bizarre, complex antigovernment beliefs." Followers think they don't have to pay taxes, can decide which laws to follow and are "clogging up the courts with indecipherable filings."

When confronted, "many of them lash out in rage, frustration and, in the most extreme cases, acts of deadly violence," usually against government officials, the center says.

But their "weapon of choice" is paper. According to the center, a traffic violation or pet licensing case can spark "dozens of court filings containing hundreds of pages of pseudo-legal nonsense."

In Benson's traffic case, he was ticketed and his car was towed after an officer found he didn't have a license. But Benson claimed that he didn't need one and that he was "traveling ... in his private car, not for hire, not in commerce, not driving."

According to the FBI, sovereigns sometimes write only in certain colors or include personal seals or red thumbprints. They also carry bogus driver's licenses, commit mortgage fraud and use fake currency.

David Lopez, head of real estate fraud prosecution at the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, said he deals with sovereigns "consistently." They forge deeds, create bank accounts in multiple names, even hire prostitutes or homeless people to pose with fake IDs as deceased homeowners to give houses away, he said.

"We just get crazy stuff," Lopez said.

LAWSUIT FOR THE HOUSE

On May 4, less than a week after the Catanias say they went back for their belongings, Benson filed a document with the Clark County Recorder's Office: a lease for the home.

The custom-built property, 10280 W. La Mancha Ave., was bank-owned at the time. But according to the lease, the landlord was a person named Nana I Am and the tenant was The Batangyagit Foundation.

Benson and Nana also sued for the house the day the lease was filed. They sought \$15 million, claimed that the foreclosure was illegal and said Nana was suing on behalf of Myles Catania.

The case was dismissed in September, and Catania told the Review-Journal that he had never heard of Thomas Benson, Nana I Am or the lawsuit.

Nana, who could not be reached for comment, is a mysterious figure who's been accused of posing as a lawyer and of getting paid to help people stall foreclosures or evictions. Nana has filed dozens of lawsuits in recent years, often with people who lost their home to lenders, but he never seems to win. Most cases seemed to involve homes in Southern California, though he's tied to at least a handful locally.

People arrested in May for squatting in a foreclosed home on Sierra Brook Court, a half-mile from the Catanias' old house, claimed that Nana had given them the keys and coached them on what to say if police showed up, according to an arrest report. Nana also teamed with two of them to sue for the property, but police said they merely wanted to live for free in the two-story, 4,600-square-foot custom-built house with granite countertops and a dual staircase in the foyer.

When Benson was stopped by Metro, he says, he was driving to the Sierra Brook house.

Police say the homes are linked. And when the Review-Journal showed the Catanias the mug shots of some people arrested at Sierra Brook, the family said they were part of the group that had tossed their former home.

Marilyn Caston, a lawyer for the accused Sierra Brook squatters, said her clients mentioned Benson as being "affiliated with that elusive Nana I Am guy."

Caston said she didn't know whether her clients had met Benson or how they met Nana. But, she added, they would deny "any involvement with any other property."

11/27/2016

Benson has been linked to other Las Vegas homes.

Former owners of a house on Vista Linda Avenue in Summerlin said in court papers in 2014 that Benson had been "a co-resident" there with Perla Hernandez, who lost the property to foreclosure and had "no more than squatter's rights" to it. They suspected he provided legal briefs and strategy that Hernandez used in court and claimed that he offered seminars and kits that helped people file "frivolous proceedings" to prevent evictions.

When the Review-Journal called a number listed in Hernandez's court papers, a woman answered, but after a newspaper request to speak with Hernandez about her ties to Benson, the line went dead.

RAID BY AUTHORITIES

Benson was home with his wife and son and a house guest one morning when Las Vegas police and federal agents burst in. They broke down the front door, broke windows and pointed rifles at the group as they came downstairs. Benson wasn't arrested, but police took his computers, phone, iPad and various papers.

That's according to Benson, who described the June 28 raid in court papers. He included a copy of a search warrant that showed authorities were looking for information on mortgage fraud, sovereign citizen ideology and financial documents related to The Batangyagit Foundation. It also indicates they raided 1300 Mount Augusta Court, a home owned by Hernandez.

Benson has complained about the investigation into him, directing much of his ire at Detective Kenneth Mead of Metro's Homeland Security Division, whom he sued as part of the traffic case.

He stated that Mead "seems to hold an extreme grudge" against him; that visitors could not come by to learn about his Javita Coffee product "for fear that they will all be investigated" by Mead; and that Mead and Metro "have as much authority to investigate me as WALMART SECURITY."

Through a Metro spokesman, Mead declined to comment and said lawyers for Metro and the FBI would decline all interview requests as well.

BANK FORECLOSES

Bank of New York Mellon foreclosed on the Catanias' house in November 2015, property records show. Myles' wife, Carol, says the family reached a deal with attorneys to stay until June 1 but was evicted April 20. Officers had the locks changed and told the family they had 10 minutes to leave, the Catanias say.

An eviction was ordered April 13, court records show. A lawyer for the bank did not return a call seeking comment.

After scrambling to pack, the Catanias moved to Santa Fe Station. More than a week later, Myles got a voicemail from a man named Tom. Carol figured he was a lawyer for the bank but never learned who he was.

When the family arrived with U-Haul trucks, their belongings were strewn everywhere. The couple's teenage daughter, Alexandria, got into a screaming match with a woman who wouldn't say where her jewelry went. Tom also was at the house and talked about aliens and how Jesus had created the X-Men, she said.

Her sister Julie DiCurcio-Hornbuckle smashed furniture and other property with a sledgehammer after hearing that the strangers planned to sell at a swap meet what the family left behind.

Asked whether any of this made sense – if the family were locked out and strangers wanted to loot the place, why would Tom call? – they said no, it did not.

"When you're in a hotel, so depressed and so upset, and your whole world's upside down, you don't stop to think about what's rational," DiCurcio-Hornbuckle said.

The bank sold the house in August for just over \$1 million. Myles said he would move back if given the chance, though Alexandria isn't sure. She loves the house, but it's a "nightmare" to think about.

"It's kind of scary that people are getting away with this at this point," she said. "And I feel bad for people like us who are falling for it."

Contact Review-Journal writer Eli Segall at (702) 383-0342. On Twitter at @eli_segall

PLENTY MORE WHERE HE CAME FROM

Thomas Benson isn't the only accused sovereign citizen with ties to Southern Nevada.

Others include allegedly phony doctor Rick Van Thiel, of Las Vegas. Accused of threatening lives by performing sham medical procedures, Van Thiel was indicted this year on more than two dozen charges, including sexual assault and child abuse.

According to a compilation by the Anti-Defamation League, other alleged sovereigns linked to the valley include:

Thanh Viet Jeremy Cao: A federal grand jury in Las Vegas indicted the Southern California resident in 2010 for filing bogus liens in Nevada against federal employees. His alleged liens ranged from \$25 million to \$300 million, the U.S. Justice Department said.

Jan Lindsey: The retired FBI agent from Henderson pleaded guilty in 2010 to evading \$109,000 in personal income taxes.

Harold Call: The Las Vegas resident was arrested on gun charges in 2009 as part of a group that included Lindsey. Prosecutors alleged that Call kept grenades, dozens of firearms, a gas mask and night-vision goggles in a hidden crawl space, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Gold-Quest International: The Securities and Exchange Commission in 2008 froze the Las Vegas company's assets and sued its owners for allegedly running a Ponzi scheme. According to the SEC, the owners claimed that they weren't subject to U.S. or Canadian jurisdiction because they were members of the so-called Little Shell Nation Indian tribe, supposedly based in North Dakota. The SEC, however, said Little Shell was not recognized as a sovereign tribe or nation.

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Could you eat this 8,000 calorie sandwich stuffed with kebab meat?

metro.co.uk

Will Grice for Metro.co.ukSaturday 19 Nov 2016 3:30 pm



Could you eat this 8,000 calorie sandwich stuffed with kebab meat?

The meal comes with a free trip to A&E (Picture: Facebook – The George Pub and Grill)

Dubbed Britain's most fattening sandwich, this whopping 8,000 calorie sarnie isn't for the faint hearted.

The huge meal has four times the recommended number of calories for women, and over three times the amount of calories recommended for a man.

Based on Middlesbrough's local cuisine – parmo – the £13.95 parmo kebab is made up of two huge parmos (breaded chicken covered in melted cheese, for the uninitiated) and is filled with kebab

meat.

Diners have to sign a form to say they won't sue in the event of a heart attack, and the restaurant promise to drive diners showing signs of possible heart failure to A&E.

For sale at the George Pub and Grill in Stockton, the meal has become a hit with the locals.

Bar manager Craig Harker told the Mail Online:

'If anyone has a heart attack after eating the meal we'll pay for a taxi to the hospital.



It features two parmos and a load of kebab meat (Picture: Facebook - The George Pub and Grill)

It features two parmos and a load of kebab meat (Picture: Facebook – The George Pub and Grill)

'And if they do pop their clogs whilst eating it, we'll chip in on the headstone.'

'The dish has gone down very, very well.

'Looks can be deceiving. For example, here the sandwich looks pretty normal – but it is packed with just so many carbs.

One of the pub's other eating challenges (Picture: Facebook – The George Pub and Grill)

'It only really takes 10 minutes to make – so we

usually get them out pretty quick.'

The pub are well known in the local area for their food challenges, with their menu featuring five different offerings.



One of the pub's other eating challenges (Picture: Facebook - The George Pub and Grill)

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13 haunted places in Los Angeles

From ghost sightings to strange noises, check out these 13 haunted places in L.A. for some real scares

By Ramona Saviss and Michael JulianoPosted: Tuesday September 20 2016



Photograph: Jakob N. Layman

Call us old-fashioned, but we like our haunted places in L.A. authentic. We're not talking about manufactured scares at haunted houses; we searched the spookiest nabes for horror hot spots—and consulted our friends over at Ghost Hunters of Urban Los Angeles (GHOULA). Founder Richard Carradine has been collecting tales of L.A. haunted spots for years, and every month (on the 13th, naturally) GHOULA hosts Spirits with Spirits mixers at some of the city's spookiest venues. "We have two rules on where we meet—it's got to serve alcohol and it's got to be haunted," he says.

Ready to scare yourself silly? Here's your handy guide to the 13 most haunted places in L.A., including a Hollywood

theater, a notorious Downtown hotel and a Long Beach oceanliner where ghosts of the past still rattle a few chains. And if you're feeling brave, consider embarking on a haunted tour of Downtown L.A.

13 real haunted places in L.A.



Pasadena's "Suicide Bridge"

The haunting and hauntingly beautiful Colorado Street Bridge in Pasadena was completed in 1913, claimed its first suicide in 1919 and has been racking up the bodies ever since.

"There are 102—and counting—documented suicides of people jumping off the bridge. Pasadena doesn't like the notoriety, so when the count would get too high they would knock off some numbers," says Carradine. "The number of suicides is actually much higher, even with the fences that are up now."

And Carradine has heard ghost stories aplenty. "People have seen a man leaping off a rail, but when they go to

help, no one's there. There's also a woman seen crossing the bridge, cars swerving to miss her, but then she vanishes."

Carradine's even had his own spooky brush with the bridge. "It was nighttime, and I was walking with a friend in the tunnel underneath the bridge," he recalls. "There's a series of six lights illuminating the path, and as we passed the first light, it went out. The second light went out as we passed. Each light went out as we passed by. By the time we got to the end, it was just total darkness behind us."

Photograph: Courtesy CC/Flickr/Cody

Hollywood Roosevelt



Legend has it that the ghost of Marilyn Monroe still haunts her old stomping grounds. "There was a famous mirror in the lobby where people would take pictures and claim they could see Marilyn's reflection above them," Carradine says of the full-length mirror that once hung in Monroe's poolside suite, and then in the lobby where it has since been removed (kill-joys!).

On the ninth floor, you can hear the late actor Montgomery Clift—who lived in suite 928 for three months while filming From Here to Eternity—practicing on his trumpet. "Guests have asked the hotel staff to tell the person in the next room to stop playing in the middle of the night," Carradine says. "But the room was actually vacant." What's more? Lights and faucets are known to

turn on and off on their own and the switchboard gets calls from vacant rooms.



The Comedy Store

Before this popular Sunset Strip comedy club appeared on the scene in 1972, it was Ciro's restaurant, one of Hollywood's hippest clubs during the 1940s and '50s. Its owners had a close affiliation with the mob and the building still has peepholes in the upper walls of the main room that once allowed mobsters to see who was coming and going. Mickey "The King of the Sunset Strip" Cohen used the club as his base of operations.

"West Hollywood was a gangster-run place with gun fights in the streets," says Carradine. "The basement of the club was where they would take care of problem people. There is still a hole in the stairway that fits a gun, to shoot anyone going up or downstairs." Carradine says

employees have claimed to hear voices, cries and even snarls coming from the basement. "After years of denying the ghost stories, the Comedy Store is now embracing its past and even started tours of the haunted basement," he adds.

Photograph: Courtesy CC/Flickr/Alan Light



Cinefamily at the Silent Movie Theatre

The beloved Silent Movie Theatre has a complicated history worthy of a blockbuster drama. The original owner, John Hampton, started the theater in 1942, showing his personal film collection at a time when most studios were destroying old silent prints. Hampton used toxic chemicals in his bathtub above the theater to preserve his films—unwittingly exposing himself to toxins that hastened his demise in 1990 from cancer. Hampton's mentee Lawrence Austin took over the theater.

But one night in 1997, while visitors were watching a film, Austin was shot to death in the lobby by a hitman. The whole thing turned out to be a murder-for-hire conspiracy hatched by Austin's lover and theater projectionist James

Van Sickle, who later claimed that Austin signed the theater over to him in a hand-written will. Police weren't buying it. Van Sickle and the hitman are currently serving life in jail.

"We had a woman come to our last Spirits with Spirits event who was actually there that night when the shooting happened," says Carradine. "She saw his body lying there and hasn't been back since."

Austin's ghost is said to still haunt the lobby; and Hampton's ghost can be heard roaming the second floor, where he once lived.



The Hollywood Sign

Back when it was the Hollywoodland sign, this icon to celluloid fantasy also served as a beacon to suicidal Angelenos—most notably Broadway stage actress Peg Entwistle. Trouble just seemed to follow Entwistle. Raised by her actor father, she lost both her mother and stepmother early in life and had a series of broken personal relationships. As an actress, Entwistle enjoyed critical reviews, and even shared the stage with Humphrey Bogart, but she was forever cast in the role of comedic ingénue and could only snag small film roles.

On September 18, 1932, a hiker found the blond, blueeyed actress' crumpled body in a ravine below the Hollywoodland sign. Police surmised that she climbed a

workman's ladder to the top of the 45-foot letter "H" and jumped to her death. Visitors to the area say they still see the actress haunting the sign, and sometimes pick up the scent of her gardenia perfume.



Griffith Park

What, you don't know about the sad tale of Doña Petrenilla? It's a ghost story that's been oft-told by writer Michael Imlay and the good folks at Creepy LA, but it bears seasonal repeating. In the late 1800s, wealthy land owner Don Antonio Feliz died suddenly from small pox. As legend has it, when his beloved 17-year-old niece Doña was cheated out of her uncle's will, she put a nasty curse on the land and its owners.

Since then, untimely deaths and ill omens have befallen the land's deed holders, including Griffith J. Griffith, its last owner, who donated 3,105 acres to the city before going to prison for shooting and maining his wife.

True believers say they've seen young Doña in a white dress on horseback haunting the trails. "A couple of park rangers have told me that they've seen ghosts and things in the park," says Griffith Park security officer Thomas Davey. "There are definitely stories. But I've been here for four-and-a-half years and haven't seen anything myself."

Pantages Theatre

When charmed businessman Howard Hughes owned the infamous Pantages Theatre, he built a door that connected his office directly to one of the theater balconies, where he would go to think in the dark. Hughes' ghost is a notorious workaholic, and is said to be seen in his former office on the second floor.

"During the restoration in 2000, people said they saw a man stepping off the balcony, walking along the scaffolding, and standing over a worker to inspect his work. When the guy turned to ask the man what he wanted, the figure vanished," says Carradine. Seems like Hughes is still looking after his theater.

The Pantages is also host to a female presence who died during a show in 1932. "During a cast recording once, microphones were set up in the theater and they heard someone singing in the mic when no one was on stage." Some say the woman who died was an aspiring singer who's living out her unrealized dreams of performing at



the Pantages.



The

Culver Studios

The studio complex where such legendary Tinseltown films as *Gone with the Wind* and *Raging Bull* were filmed was built in 1918 by silent movie pioneer Thomas Ince. Ince died in 1924, after falling ill on newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst's yacht during a star-studded cruise and dinner, celebrating Ince's 42nd birthday.

While the official cause of death was listed as heart failure, legend has it that Ince was actually shot and killed by a jealous Hearst, who was supposedly aiming at (and missed) Charlie Chaplin, who had eyes for Hearst's mistress Marion Davies.

Some say Ince's ghost still shows up for work at his beloved former studio, and can be seen and heard walking through walls and criticizing management.

Photograph: Courtesy CC/Wikimedia/Termer



The Del Monte Speakeasy

This basement bar below the Townhouse restaurant in Venice was a true speakeasy during Prohibition. Back in the day, the speakeasy kept the hooch flowing via underground tunnels, which are now used as utility corridors.

Some say former proprietor Frank Bennett, who owned the bar from 1972 until his passing in 2003, still haunts his favorite corner booth, across from the bar. "Venice was a real crazy place historically, in terms of alcohol and bars, especially during Prohibition," Carradine says of the area. "This bar is a weird anomaly, it's one of the oldest bars in L.A. with one of the newest ghosts," he says about Bennett, who still watches over his beloved underground

watering hole.

Yamashiro

This gorgeous Japanese restaurant at the top of Sycamore Avenue in Hollywood features sweeping views of the L.A. cityscape—the perfect vantage point for resting souls. Pull up a barstool next to the phantom of a former bartender who has been spotted around the bar.

The restaurant also serves as the perfect backdrop for events and weddings, if you don't mind a little company in the bridal suite. "There have been sounds of a crying bride; and a woman in white has been seen up there," Carradine says.



Legend has it that the ashes of former property owner, Thomas O. Glover, are buried in the inner garden courtyard and that he still watches over his property. Rumors abound about silhouettes of a man and woman seen strolling the family-owned property and the unexplainable sounds of crashing plates (and you thought that was just a clumsy waiter).



Queen Mary

Sure, they milk the spook factor for all it's worth every Halloween during Dark Harbor, but the Queen Mary in Long Beach is certifiably haunted according to the countless visitors who claim to hear voices and rattling chains during tours and overnight stays.

The Queen Mary certainly has a past that's ripe for modern-day hauntings. She started life as a luxury liner, setting forth on her maiden voyage from Southampton, England, in 1937, and hosting everyone from Bob Hope to Winston Churchill. But when WWII began, the Queen Mary was drafted into service as a ferry ship, carrying thousands of troops into battle areas. The fancy lady was stripped of her chic facade, painted a camo grey and dubbed the "Grey Ghost." After years of service in war, and at her majesty's whim, the Queen Mary was eventually sold to a tour operator and sent to retirement in Long Beach, where she's been a floating hotel and event spot since 1967.

According to the late psychic and ghost hunter, Peter James, who led tours around the Queen Mary, almost all areas of the ship including the second class pool deck and engine room 13 are known to be haunted.



Cobb Estate/Haunted Forest

Avid hikers will recognize this spot as the Sam Merrill trailhead, "a quiet refuge from people and wild life forever"—so reads the dedication on the cobblestone gate of the Cobb Estate. But to ghost hunters, it's the Haunted Forest.

The sparse forest didn't seem so haunted until the 1950s, when the Marx Brothers purchased the land and temporarily saved the dilapidated mansion from destruction—in the process turning it into a favorite haunt for squatters and ne'er-do-wells.

Today, you're more likely to find curious teens at night wandering around what's left of the house's foundation;

though ghost sightings are non-specific, many report ghostly noises on the surviving staircase and the feeling that they're being watched in the dimly lit forest.



Cecil Hotel

Though it's had the odd ghost sighting or two, the Cecil Hotel's history is haunted by real-life boogeymen.

The hotel saw murders in the '20s and '30s, suicides out of upper-floor windows in the '60s and the residence of serial killers Richard Ramirez (the Night Stalker) and Jack Unterweger. Most infamously, the naked body of tourist Elisa Lam was found in a rooftop water tank; surveillance video showed Lam acting oddly in the elevator.

It was enough to inspire an entire season of *American Horror Story*, but apparently not enough to shut down the hotel; it's now called Stay on Main and slated to be converted into a mix of rental units and hotel rooms.

Photograph: Courtesy CC/Wikimedia/Jim Winstead

By: Michael JulianoPosted: Thursday September 29 2016, 12:00am

32 comments Appsforsys S

It is a great article. You will surely like this also because it is a great stuff, yeah its give us lots of interest and pleasure. Their opportunities are so fantastic and working style so speedy. http://appsforsys.com/pizap-photo-editor-pizap-pizap-com-photos-collage-maker-for-android-and-ios/

Diane R

how do i get a ghost tour or ghost hunt how do i find someone that does that

Diane R

how do i get some kind of ghost tour of these haunt ed places

Joel C

i wonder if this is the same place i when to 2 years ago

Azucena J

I would love to go tomorrow 29 Feb 2016! If anyone one hopefully more than one wants to go please email asap at zucy44@hotmail.com. i am a female, 29 and on a mission to explore this place as my last stop on my roadtrip back home to Nevada. Please please email me asap if you're serious!

Joel C

@Azucena J lets go i email you

Caden W

I just went to this hospital literally last night with my 3 friends we snuck into the asylum by a door that was half ripped off after we got inside it was completely dirty, shit was everywhere on the ground and there were dark hallways that were scary af and we went in every room and this one room that scared me the most... We are walking down this hallway and we open the door and it's an empty room with nothing but a satanist book opened up to a page and it's just sitting in the middle of the room... We left after we read it it was terrifying so we left that room saw another door with a bullet shot through the glass part of it and we kept hearing things so we finally started to leave and we couldn't find our way out like we were convinced they switched it around and we couldn't find a way out so after 20 mins we finally did and we walk out and see a cop car he tells us to put our hands up and he lets us off with a warning but he told us that 1 week ago a girl got raped in the building we

were in and 2 weeks ago a guy got mugged and lost his wallet and keys but there were 4 of us so I think that's one of the main reasons why nothing happened to us like one of my friends is 6'4 so there was no way but I'm telling you if you have seen the movie grave encounters you will be so scared you have no idea it's a thrill it's terrifying try it but with a group

Azucena J

I would love to go tomorrow 29 Feb 2016! If anyone one hopefully more than one wants to go please email asap at zucy44@hotmail.com. i am a female, 29 and on a mission to explore this place as my last stop on my roadtrip back home to Nevada. Please please email me asap if you're serious!

tony h

So I live in montebello been here for little over 2 years Its a trip because in my apartment when its time to go to sleep and all lights ae off I hear the chairs squeek or a sound like if they are being draged my girl friends sister came to stay the night with us and she slept on living room and she told me she herd noices lol it wasnt new to me another ocation my girl friends mom came over to watch my son and her to told me when she was sleeping in living room that it sounded like if someone was draging himself in the floor she whent to chek it out and it was nothing so that she tried going back to sleep and she herd it again she got freaked out once me and my son were having brekfast and he told me daddy theres a baby skelleton I was lile ok wth lol I told him were at he said hes in back of you and I was sitting with my back to wall my son was 4 at the time

Alize R

Under the 710 fwy bridge on the LA river bike path . I saw a guy staring at me from about 200 ft it was dark like at 8 pm. Then when I was coming closer like around 100 ft it was weird because he was looking at me but he wasn't sitting on the rocks. He was standing on the rocks because his back was straight at first I thought it was a crazy bum so I got scared. When I got closer around 20 ft away I could see and obvious shadow under the bridge on the rocks again that shadow had it back straight and it wasn't sitting on the rocks because you can't sit on those jagged rocks with your back straight. But the shadow was as high as me and if it where standing on the rocks it would have been taller than me it seem as though he was standing through the rocks. When I got besides him or it there was nothing there! I looked back and the shadow gone it was an obvious shadow figure of a person. It was crazy you should check it out its under the 710 bridge on the LA river bike path and there is some rocks next to the path on your right heading southbound it's very dark when your under the bridge and this happened like around 8 15 pm 2 days ago I'm never going back there again at least at that time!

Stacey N

I am very sensitive to the presence of spirits...and let me tell you THEY ARE NOT NICE SENSATIONS!...a lot of people ask me if when I go my mothers grave "if I feel her presence or the presence of anyone else and if it is a bad presence"?...I say "yes I can feel my mums spirit and others in that graveyard, however the graveyard is one of the most peaceful places I have ever been to"! But the one place I wouldn't advise going to is lanhydrock! I don't quite know what happened there but it was bad! I was walking through following my mum and dad and my auntie and her baby...we were walking through the bedrooms of the former owners on the tour of the house and we got to the children's nursery all of a sudden I felt sick to my stomach...I was sweating but had chills going up my spine at the same time! it's was a really unpleasant feeling...then I felt a soft pressure like someone was squeezing my rists! and I felt like I was being dragged...my mum just said it looked like I was drunk because I was staggering!....it felt like that spirit was pulling me away like it didn't want me there....it was the freakiest experience ever! I ask my mum about it later on and she said "The children that lived there all grew up except one of them was killed at five by a broken shelf supporting books that fell on him". I asked later if my nan had heard of this and she said "yes lanhydrock is haunted". I asked how she knew and she said "my mothers auntie knew the people that lived there and yes the little boy was killed" I asked if she thought it was him that gave me my experience and she said "what happened" I explained it to her she responded "what was he pulling you towards"? I said "the nursery" she just looked at me funny and told me to not worry about it...I don't know what she was thinking about but it obviously wasn't a good thought!

Jasmin E

I went there very easy to go and there's a lot of park rangers tho

C S

I can feel ghosts, their troubles, anger, etc. I have learned to build a wall around myself, nowadays, LOL. I was overwhelmed both times I was aboard the Queen Mary. Couldn't get off QUICK ENOUGH. The place where the wheel to steer the ship, the area just outside that and the girl at the pool area, are ALL VERY MUCH there. The feeling at the wheel is anger, disgust, she is inundated with 'landers'. The area, hall, to the R when you face the wheel, is sadness, a life felt so worthless. The girl & others at the pool...I cannot recall, had so much hitting me while on board. There is a lunch area on the water side, that was the most 'peaceful' but NOT without That feeling, something, someone was or had been there.

Tash R

@C S How do you feel ghosts? Please email me I am very interested. nsquarred@aim.com

@C S I have to say if I was trapped on a ship with a unpleasant presence I would FREAK! I would have jumped over board and swam away from it...Do you get the same experience as me? Whenever I feel spirits I feel sick, I start to sweat but have chills too!.? I have also felt a slight pressure around my rists before and also felt like I was being dragged away or towards something? You might have seen what I said about my experience at lanhydrock...well that was true! it was horrifying. It's actually quite comforting to know someone else has had a similar experience to me. No on understood what and how I felt when I explained it to them....but my mum wants to go again and I was like "hell no"! But seriously I hate it when I feel them unless it is my mums or peaceful spirits of course.



Timothy K 5pts

Who Ever Is Down To Go Hmu Add Me Or Whatever (:

Bryan W

Yo tim I'm down to go

D'yanira O

Let's do this

Brialynn K

How easy is it to sneak in?

MH S

The Downey "Los amigos mental hospital" is not easy to get into. You have to drive down a road where cops can spot you coming in. If your lucky you will get a cop on a good day who knows your a thrillseeker and let you leave without a ticket. If your not lucky you'll get a rookie cop who will hate you search your car threaten you then give you a tresspassing ticket. So be carefully I live around the area and have gone in maybe 2x out of the 6 try's over the last 5 years. It is def haunted and scary.

Timothy K

@ Brialynn K Im Going To Go Sneak In This Saturday Im Taking My Camera & Everything Else I Need To Get Some Good Pix And Stuff (: Are U Down To Go??

@MH S do you know the address? i really want to try to get in

D'vanira O

Let's go I know where

anna banana1223

This is spooky I found some other haunted spots in LA int his article: http://www.sourceoneop.com/blog/haunts-of-los-angeles/. I cant wait to check them out!

Mollie

So scary

Katisen Marks

I had once been haunted buy this wicked old witch. ever since i was a littl egirl she just won't stop messing with me. Every night when i try to go to sleep she always spooking me around, i always end sleeping with my parents. i never forget that day. She still creeps me out when i talk about her.

Mark Beaver

Lots of friends that have worked at the Hollywood Athletic Club have many stories about weird things going on in that place.

Angel

wooooow soo many haunted places... Now i konw what to avoid.

Nichole Deweesm

Ive been to the rancho los amigos Hospital aka hollydale mental hospital, several times. Its located on Gardendale ave.and garfield st.in the city of Downey,ca Ive been inside every bldg.including a few bungelows on the outside. Ive never personally experianced any spirits, just feels really eerie. Some parts are burned out. And other parts, the roof is missing. All of it is rubbish now. I saw the old nurses stations and refridgerators where they kept the medicine. More interesting, I found the medical records dept. where theres was paperwork and patient files, I did my own investigation while reviewing the files and figured out that whoever the representitive was handling the signing of the documents was actually stealing money from the patients annuities as well as any open accounts they had. Im guessing with all the drugs these patients were on it must have been easy for her to have them sign away their assets. I also found out that the reason it was shut down, was because the nurses were abuseing the patients and the patients were commiting suicide and killing eachother. The rest were transferred out. I have no doubt that the place has some torchered souls. I heard bangs and sounds while there that was enough to send me out running scared. I never did find the basement, where some say the demonic spirits exsist. In the daytime, its pretty easy to sneak in. Just dont get caught. The police acadamy was stationed there some years ago, but they left, because they were experiancing things. I tried to sneak my cousin in one night a during that time and we got chased out by a patrol car, he clearly looked freaked out and pale like he saw something. If you want a good thrill, this is definatly the place. And let me know if u find the basement.Goodluck ghosthunting.

sweetdoll

My brother and nephew went in side rancho los amigos i was going but chicken out me and my sister in law waited in the car while they were looking inside but ended up seeing. Nothing but old files every were they said and dark of course pluse they said it had a bad smell to it they almost got caught by a police officer they said supposedly they were jogging and the cop said with boots and dark clothing so finally they let them go that was it.

Derek H

@Nichole Deweesm Been there quite a few times myself (mostly when I'm angry at someone or just want a quiet place to think) -- Never seen anything scary, although sometimes i fall asleep by the porch of where the owners used to live. (I get tired for some reason.)

MH S

Wtf you weirdo that place is haunted. N that porch your chillen on looks like it's straight out of a Michael Myers movie. And going inside of the hospital scared the shit out of me probably because I was using my iPhone for a

light. Every corner you turn in there myight would reflect on dozens and I mean DOZENS of cat eyes in there. Not only were there a lot of cats but they were ALL black cats. We also found disturbing medical documents in there.

Time Out Los Angeles Site map

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60-year-old Home Depot worker in Alabama operates Venezuelan government's most hated website

By Leada Gore | Igore@al.com on November 21, 2016 at 12:18 PM

al.com



Dolar Today, operated by Leada Gore | lgore@al.com

During work hours, 60-year-old Gustavo Diaz is an employee at Home Depot in Hoover. In his free time however, Diaz has become the worst nightmare of the troubled Venezuelan government.

A retired Venezuelan army colonel involved in a 2002 coup against then-president Hugo Chavez, Diaz operates DolarToday.com, which tracks daily

exchange rates between the U.S. and the South American country, along with unflattering news about the government of President Nicolas Maduro. Diaz's efforts - described as an "economic war by Venezuelan officials - were detailed in an extensive profile last weekend in the Wall Street Journal.

Diaz, now a U.S. citizen after seeking asylum in 2005, uses his site to set benchmark exchange rates so that can buy and sell black market dollars, bypassing the country's stringent currency controls. The country is in the midst of a severe economic crisis – inflation has topped 1,000 percent and food, medicine and necessities are in short supply – and DolarToday makes it easier for get around government controls.

That process leads to destabilization and what Diaz and backers hope will be the end of Maduro's government.

DolarToday been the target of two lawsuits filed by Maduro's socialist government, which has threatened to jail Diaz and his partners, two Venezuelan expatriates living in the U.S., if they return to the country. Government-sponsored hackers attempt to breach DolarToday.com regularly, Diaz told the WSJ.

Diaz is undeterred, however.

"It's ironic that with DolarToday in Alabama, I do more damage to the government than I did as a military man in Venezuela," Diaz said.

You can read the complete profile here.

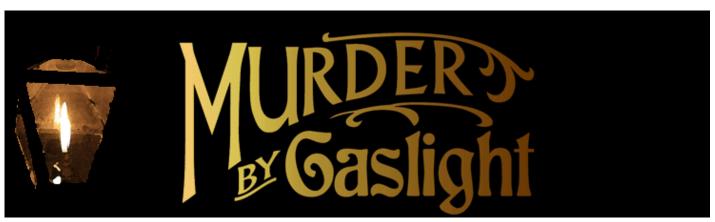


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A Contract with the Devil.



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, February 9, 2013

A Contract with the Devil.



On April 16, 1897, cashier Joseph A. Stickney was murdered during a daring daylight robbery of the Great Falls National Bank in Somersworth, New Hampshire. The frenzied investigation that followed, crossed state and national borders resulting in the arrests of Joseph Kelley, a resident of Somersworth with peculiar habits. Joseph E. Kelley confessed to the murder, leaving the court to decide whether his actions were driven by a mental disorder, whether he was feigning mental disability, or whether Kelley had in fact made a contract with the devil.

Date: April 16, 1897

Location: Somersworth, New Hampshire

Victim: Joseph A. Stickney

Cause of Death: Blows to the head, slashing

Accused: Joseph E. Kelley

Synopsis:

Twenty-four year old Joseph Kelly lived in a room in a Somersworth, New Hampshire boarding house, across the street from the Great Falls National Bank. Every day he would watch through the bank window as the elderly clerk, Joseph A. Stickney counted piles of greenbacks, gold and silver. Kelley, who was in debt and in desperate need of money, began to imagine how easy it would be to



walk into the bank and take the cash. The image became irresistible and Kelley devised a simple plan to rob the bank.

On April 15, Kelley went into the bank wearing a false mustache and goatee, and carrying a revolver. The presence of a woman customer in the bank scared him off, but following day he once again donned the disguise and entered the bank when no other customers were there. Joseph Stickney, the cashier, knew Kelly, but the old man did not recognize him in the false beard. Kelley ordered some stamps from the cashier and when Stickney went in to the cashier's room, Kelley followed him and shut the glass door behind him. When Stickney shouted for the police Kelly struck him on the head several times with a blackjack. Stickney

fell to the floor and Kelley cut his throat with a razor.



Kelley quickly stuffed \$4,125 in bills and coins into a pillow case he had brought with him. The door to the cashier's room had locked when shut, so Kelley had to shatter the glass to get out. The bank was still empty and Kelley was able to leave unobserved. He returned to his boarding house, ate dinner, and paid his landlady twenty dollars that he owed. Kelley transferred the rest of the money into a suitcase then went to the train depot.

The body of Joseph Stickney lay undiscovered for over two hours. When police realized what had happened, Joseph Kelley was considered a suspect but they believed that he had accomplices. They also believed that he had returned to his home state of Massachusetts. Two men were arrested in Waltham, Massachusetts and held in

connection with the Somersworth robbery until both proved to have alibis.

Joseph Kelley had grown up in the town of Amesbury, Massachusetts in a family of ten children, all described as "bright and smart." His family told reporters that young Joe was a quiet orderly boy who was barely 10 years old when he began to turn wild. He had been involved in some petty thefts, such as bicycle stealing, and served about seven months in the Concord reformatory for breaking and entering. But those in Amesbury who knew him were surprised at the charge of murder and believed that if he was involved in the robbery it was as an accessory and not a principal.



Kelley had not gone to Massachusetts; he had taken a Boston & Maine train as far as Union, Maine. There he took the next train for Cookshire Junction, Quebec, where he boarded the Halifax Express and bought a ticket for Montreal.

When the Somersworth police realized that Kelley had travelled north, they traced his movement to the town of St. Justin De Newton, Quebec. There he had paid a hotelkeeper \$10 in gold for a woman's dress and left the hotel wearing the dress, saying that he

wanted to surprise his wife who lived in Montreal. Kelly was found in a Montreal brothel, sitting between two prostitutes and still wearing the dress. If the disguise was meant to fool the police, it

had not worked; Kelley was arrested by the Montreal Police and extradited back to Somersworth, New Hampshire to stand trial.

Trial: November 8, 1897

Joseph E. Kelley was tried in Dover, New Hampshire and on the first day of the trial the jury was taken by train to Somersworth to see the murder site and Kelley's room across the street. Kelley smiled throughout the proceedings both in Somersworth and Dover, and seemed to enjoy the attention he was getting.

Back in the Dover courtroom the prosecution presented witnesses who had seen Kelley the day of the murder or who had seen a man with a mustache carrying a pillow case. Railroad employees who had spoken to Kelley that day testified, as did the Quebec hotelkeeper who sold him the dress.

The cross-examinations of the Somersworth witnesses by the defense indicated that they might be seeking an insanity plea. Kelley was described as boyish; he wrote poetry and had tried several unusual money making schemes, such as selling artificial bouquets on the street and using a megaphone from the roof of a hotel to advertise businesses. On the fourth day of the trial it became official—when court opened that morning, Kelley stood up and said he was ready to plead guilty if his hanging could be scheduled for January 16, 1898. The reason for the date was that Kelley had a contract with the devil that would expire on January 15. The guilty plea was accepted, the jury was dismissed, and the remainder of the trial would consist of arguments relating to the degree of the crime.

The Kelley family and others from Amesbury were no longer speaking of Joe as "bright and smart" but said that his Amesbury nickname had been "Foolish Joe." At age four Joe had fallen and a rusty nail had pierced his skull. He was unconscious for three days. Following that he had suffered from fits and convulsions as a child and sleepwalking as an adult.



Kelley was examined by several mental health experts who all agreed that he suffered from arrested development. Dr. Charles Bancroft of the New Hampshire State Asylum for the Insane concluded from Kelley's history and from the eight examinations he made, that Kelley was incurable, saying:

"He is a child. I should place him about 8 or 9 years old, mentally and morally. He has the impulses and instincts of a man, but the judgment and capacity of a child of 9."

Dr. Thomas Waterman, examining physician for the city of Boston concurred saying:

"A high-grade imbecile expresses Kelley's condition. He is far from being an idiot. A high-grade imbecile has all the impulses of a man but the judgment of a child."

Several other medical experts agreed with their colleagues and all asserted that Kelley was incurable and would not benefit by being sent to an asylum.

When Kelley realized the import of his plea it was a great blow to his pride. He was especially hurt when poems he had written were read in court to illustrate his mental deficiencies. The *Boston Daily Globe* described Kelley's reaction:

"...but when he found out that his lawyers were deriding his poetry, making fun of his lectures and holding him up as a maniac, he wept in poignant grief, the first emotion he has shown since he has been charged with the crime...to have his lyrics termed doggerel and to be called a high grade imbecile was too much for the prisoner's pride and he burst into violent weeping and covered his face with his handkerchief."

The judges ruled Kelley insane, found him guilty of second degree murder and sentenced him to thirty years in the State Prison in Concord. When asked what would happen after his sentence expired the medical men agreed that Kelley was unlikely to live that long.

Verdict: Guilty of second degree murder

Aftermath:

Kelley was indifferent to his sentence and almost seemed disappointed that he would not hang, telling reporters:

"Well I expected something different. I thought I was going to be hanged. My lawyers are satisfied, though, so I suppose it is all right."

In Somersworth, people were extremely dissatisfied with the outcome of the trial. Most felt that Kelley deserved to hang for his crime. A secret meeting was held among twenty men of Somersworth, New Hampshire, and Berwick, Maine, to assess the situation. They formulated a plan to kidnap Kelley while still in the Dover jail, and to take him out and lynch him, but they lacked the leadership necessary to execute the plan.

Joseph Kelley was taken guietly to Concord to begin his sentence.

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"To Lynch Kelley." The Evening Herald [Syracuse] 16 Nov. 1897: 1.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

2 comments:

Marisha R says: June 3, 2016 at 7:47 AM

I wonder what happened to him? Did he die before his sentence was up? If not where did he go?

WomenEmpowered says: June 11, 2016 at 9:31 PM

I know he was released from prison - I have that confirmed from the state. But I don't know when he died. He served the full 30 years

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A Mother Is Suing Her Child For Pursuing Gender Reassignment

i moved desks so new burner Tabby Gevinson Is Red White & Blew

jezebel.com

Today 3:04pm

Filed to: Thomas More Society



Screengrab via Facebook.

On Wednesday, Minnesota woman Anmarie Calgaro gave a press conference where she announced her intention to sue her 17-year-old transgender child who is seeking gender reassignment.

Calgaro is represented by attorney Erick Kaardal and Thomas More Society, the latter of whom is notorious for defending David

Daleiden, creator of anti-choice propaganda videos, and often prosecutes in anti-abortion cases. NBC News reports that Calgaro misgendered her daughter during the press conference, and emotionally described being left out of her child's transition process:

"The news that county agencies and health service providers, the school and other county and state offices were completely bypassing me came as a total shock," Calgaro said while beginning to cry. "Why wasn't I even notified?"

The lawsuit specifically challenges a Minnesota law that allows minors to access medical care without their parents knowledge if they are emancipated, the definition of which is a minor living separately from their parents "who is managing personal financial affairs, regardless of the source or extent of the minor's income, may give effective consent to personal medical, dental, mental and other health services, and the consent of no other person is required."

The unnamed minor in question was not interviewed by NBC News, but court papers created by her and Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid in June 2015 state that Calgaro had made it clear to her daughter that she had no wish to see her, and made no legal attempt to keep her at home, despite knowing where she resides. Kaardal, on the other hand, argues that Calgaro never received a court order of emancipation, and had no opportunity to be heard on signing away her parental rights.

The involvement of the Thomas More Society has led some to suggest that this particular case is an attempt to challenge the state's parental notification law regarding abortion. Currently, a nonemancipated minor may seek an abortion up to 48 hours after their parents have been notified that the procedure will take place. Were Calgaro to win her case, it might set a precedent for parental rights over their children's right to an abortion.

Calgaro is stating that she is taking action to protect the rights of parents in her state, saying to reporters Wednesday, "I'm also taking this action for the benefit of all parents and families, who may be facing the same violation of their rights—so that they and others in the future may be spared from the same tragic events."

Calgaro's daughter has reportedly received hormone therapy for around a year, but it is very unlikely that she will seek gender reassignment surgery before turning 18, if at all.

Aimée Lutkin@alutkin

Contributing writer at Jezebel.

The following replies are approved. To see additional replies that are pending approval, click Show Pending. Warning: These may contain graphic material.

11/17/16 3:04pm

"I want to destroy you for your own good. Why can't you see that, you ungrateful little shit that I effectively disowned."

- Calgaro
 - 11/17/16 3:07pm

"It is not enough for you to be out of my house. I insist you also be miserable."

11/17/16 3:07pm

Ding ding ding!

11/17/16 3:09pm

Some people simply shouldn't have children. If 99% of people either resisted societal pressure to have kids or waited until they were emotionally stable and financially prepared before having them, we'd crush poverty within 20 years.

11/17/16 3:10pm

What a bitch.

Show more replies in this thread

11/17/16 3:10pm

Literally, let's put a end cap on this fucking year. Someone please blow this fucking useless rock into the sun.

Fuck this lady so much. She does not deserve her child, or to parent any child, period.

11/17/16 3:12pm

I never thought I would be in favor of global warming, but maybe we don't deserve to inhabit this planet anymore. Humans are the worst.

11/17/16 3:12pm

We really don't. We're a plague.

11/17/16 3:13pm

I'm willing to bet on December 31 a meteor actually will hit Earth. Not enough to end us completely, just enough to fuck us over.

11/17/16 3:14pm

H. sapiens, scourge of Earth.

21

11/17/16 3:10pm

"I'm also taking this action for the benefit of all parents and families, who may be facing the same violation of their rights—"

YOUR rights!? YOURS?!? Your right to control another person's body!? FUCK YOU.

This is the religious bullshit we're going to deal with for the new 4 years, people. Fucking fundies who think their moralistic opinions are "rights" and more important than your bodily autonomy! THEY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DICTATE HOW OTHER PEOPLE LIVE THEIR LIVES.

11/17/16 3:12pm

Seriously. What day of Trump's America are we up to now? Or should we start counting down to add some optimism to the mix?

11/17/16 3:15pm

Let's just say it - what a fucking bitch.

11/17/16 3:16pm

"Their rights" in the sense that they think they have the "right" to basically own and control their children as they see fit. I've seen this argument about "rights" being violated a lot in the fundie homeschool community, 'cause God forbid we have standards as to how well children are educated.

11/17/16 3:16pm

As soon as someone claims "states' rights" or "parents' rights", beware of incoming bullshit.

11/17/16 3:06pm

FUCK, THIS, LADY, INTO, THE SEVENTH, CIRCLE, OF HELL.

I KNOW THAT'S NOT A SAYING BUT I AM SO FUCKING MAD.

FUCK HER FUCK HER

11/17/16 3:10pm

Yep. Fuck her. Fuck the people that are helping her sue her child. Fuck them all.

11/17/16 3:15pm

Nah. Lysistrata their asses.

11/17/16 3:18pm

YES. FUCK HER WITH ALL THE FUCKING FUCKS!!!

11/17/16 3:27pm

Well, if anyone could pull off such a herculean task, it would be Jordan Belfort.

11/17/16 3:05pm

Let's hope the daughter countersues this — person — for harassment and emotional distress.

11/17/16 3:16pm

Please let this happen please let this happen please let this happen.

I just feel so much rage all the time now because of dumb shit like this. This mother is a fucking deranged asshole.

11/17/16 3:19pm

Not to mention the danger she's putting the child in. Violence against transgendered people is rampant enough now that people in the community know that there's no family support it makes for an easier target bc no one's mom/dad are going to be hunting them down with a shotgun.

11/17/16 3:37pm

She's also essentially outing her child as trans. Initials are used in the complaint she filed, but there are enough details there (parents' names, details about the family) that classmates and anyone else who knows her personally will be able to identify her.

О 11/17/16 3:44pm

and, in addition, laws like this help protect trans kids (or kids seeking abortions or birth control or whatever medical care their parents disagree with) who would face potential violence / physical abuse from their goddamn parents if the parents knew. like that's the whole fucking point. no, lady, you don't get to know because your kid doesn't feel safe around you, and whose fucking fault is that. i want to say i can't believe she's suing her own kid, or that i can't believe there's any legal ground for her to bring such a suit, but sadly i can believe it. i hope that poor kid has someone to help keep them safe...

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WEIRD NEWS

A Woman Sent Her Amputated Toe To A Stranger On Tumblr

The photo of the disembodied toe is slightly NSFL.

① 11/28/2016 04:34 pm ET



Jenna Amatulli

Trends Editor, The Huffington Post

If feet gross you out, LEAVE NOW.

Still here? Great.

Now, let's talk about <u>this Tumblr user</u> who sent <u>another Tumblr user</u> her pinky toe. Yes, her *actual* toe.

TRENDING

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Ohio State University Attack Leaves 11 Injured

Donald Trump's Chief Strategist Doesn't Seem To Have A Problem With Suppressing Black Voters



royallyoily cummy-eyelids



A few days ago I received a very special package I the mail. It contained this amputated human toe, belonging to the lovely royallyoily. Like, literally this is a toe off of her foot. I'll be changing the solution, putting it in a new pretty jar, and potentially making it into a wearable pendant. Taking on this project is so super meaningful to me, more so than any other jewelry project i've taken on, including the engagement ring. I'm so appreciative of her trust in me, and

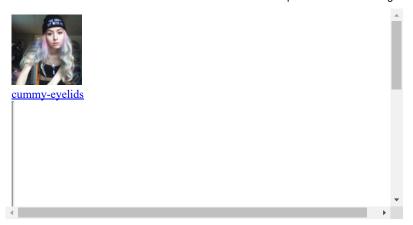
I'm so excited to get to work on this!

According to the toe's owner, Haley, the toe was amputated years ago.

"I had brachymetatarsia, a condition where one of your toes or metatarsal bones stops growing," she told The Huffington Post.

"As I got older the skin around my toe began to get infections and tear open (gross I know) and it would cause me to not be able to even walk at times. I was constantly in pain ... At age 17, a doctor said he'd help me the best he could and removing the problem seemed simplest ... He removed my 4th toe."

The recipient, Lana, was sent the disembodied toe to preserve it properly for Haley. The preservation fluid currently housing the toe expired in 2011 and Lana plans to change it out.



You probably have a lot of questions about this.

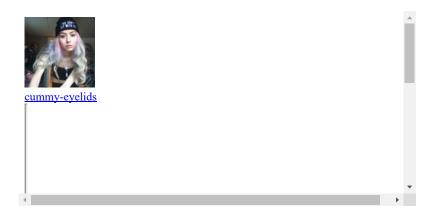
For example: Why is the toe still hangin' around? Why would someone want anyone else's random toe?

Н

A Woman Sent Her Amputated Toe To A Stranger On Tumblr

"I feel very inclined to be buried or cremated whole, with all my teeth and bones," she said. "I decided to have Lana re-jar my toe because the liquid has been long over due for a change but also because I really love my toe. It's a part of me and deserves a proper enclosure."

We, too, love our toes, Haley.



Lana said on Tumblr that in addition to changing the preservation solution, she'll be "electroforming the lid shut and adding crystals or stones to make it extra sparkly [a]nd pretty."

We're not too sure where one would don a bejeweled, disembodied toe, but to each her own. Let people live, right?

"I needed a way to honor the life my toe led. It was with me for 17 years," Haley told The Huffington Post. "It simply deserves a little more respect than the plastic jar it has been in since 2008."

Supporters of the toe exchange have been saying they wish they still had their removed ribs to send to Lana to rework. Another suggested sending part of

their amputated vagina to be turned into art.

"I've contacted various (wet specimen) artists over the years and not a single one would take on this project," said Haley. "I'm grateful that Lana is so open minded and also so talented! I'm lucky the internet connected us."

Tumblr is a magical wonderland of blogging and body parts.

(h/t NYMag)

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Rags stuffed up chimney revealed to be rare 17th century map

13:55 EST, 28 November 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk



Bundle of rags found stuffed up a chimney to stop draughts is revealed to be extremely rare priceless 17th century map

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Rare antique map was found stuffed up chimney in Aberdeen, Scotland
- Revealed to be wall map by 17th Century Dutch

engraver Gerard Valck

- There are only two other such maps currently known to be in existence
- Map was destined for the trash before being given to National Library

By Alex Matthews For Mailonline

A bundle of rags found stuffed up a chimney to stop draughts has been revealed to be a rare 17th century map.

The antique piece was found during a house renovation in Aberdeen, Scotland, and was destined for the skip before someone had a closer look and saved it from the trash.

The document is a wall map of the world by renowned Dutch engraver Gerard Valck and there are only two other known copies in existence.

Scroll down for video



This 17th century map - thought to be a bundle of rags - was stuffed in a chimney to block out draughts in a house in Aberdeen

The map was handed in to the National Library in Scotland but it arrived rolled up in a plastic bag and in very poor condition

It has now been given to the National Library. But arrived rolled up in a plastic bag and in very poor condition.

Encrusted with dirt, the map was also severely damaged in places after being

attacked by vermin and insects.

Conservationists at the Library say that once removed, it 'looked like a bundle of rags and had to be handled extremely carefully as fragments of the map fell off like confetti every time it was moved'.

However, on closer examination, it became clear that the canvas backing on the map had survived better than much of the paper itself which had disintegrated in a number of places.



The map measures 7ft by 5ft and, in its time would have been hung on a wall to be admired by visitors.

A similar map from the same period is show

A similar map from the same period is shown in the famous painting by the Dutch master Vermeer called 'Painter in his Studio'.

The work to clean and restore the map proved to be one of the most complex yet undertaken by the National Library of Scotland's conservation department.

Encrusted with dirt, the map was severely damaged in places after being attacked by vermin and insects - but now it is being restored treated by the National Library's team of experts

The map - by Dutch engraver Gerard Valck - measures 7ft by 5ft and, in its time would have been hung on a wall to be admired by visitors

It involved a variety of specialist treatments which covered five key stages - opening and

flattening the map; separating it into its original eight sections; removing the linen backing; dry cleaning and washing the paper; re-assembling the cleaned sections onto a new paper lining.

Claire Thomson, book and paper conservator at the Library, who worked on the project, said: 'Once the map was unfurled I was able to assess its condition, which I must admit filled me with dread.



'Much of the paper had been lost, and the remainder was hard and brittle in places and soft and thin in others.

'We needed to stabilise it to prevent any further deterioration, make it robust and easier to handle to get to a point where it could be studied by researchers.'

PRESERVING HISTORY: HOW THE MAP WAS RESTORED

A team from the National Museum used varied techniques including special humidifying chambers to treat the map



The map was originally printed in eight separate sections and adhered to a linen backing. It was already splitting along the joins between the sections and the decision was taken to separate the sections to make the map easier to work with. These were each placed in a humidifying chamber as the gentle introduction of moisture made it easier to flatten out the map.

Removing the backing without further damaging the paper proved to be one of the most difficult tasks. This involved using a thick cellulose solution to fix light weight Japanese paper to the front of the map in two layers. This secured the paper map while the backing was peeled off using hand tools.

The final stage of cleaning involved suspending the map sections individually in water in a heated sink at 40C for 40 minutes with the water being gently agitated to clean dirt from the surface. On removal they were placed in blotters to remove any excess water. After unknown years of neglect and misuse, the detailed splendour of a map created in a 17th century Dutch printing house was revealed.

National Librarian Dr John Scally added: 'This is one of the most challenging tasks our conservation team has faced and they have done a terrific job.

'Although significant sections of the map have been lost, the remainder has been cleaned and stabilised for future study and enjoyment.

'It would have been very easy for this map to end up at the bottom of a skip but thankfully it can now take its place among the magnificent maps held within our collection.'

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Two arrested after cops spot felons in mannequin challenge video

dailymail.co.uk 15:40 EST, 6 December 2016 |



They don't just look like dummies! Armed 'gang' are arrested after police spot them posing with their terrifying cache of weapons in mannequin challenge video

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Video was posted on Facebook November 9 and has garnered four million views
- Madison County Sheriff's Office investigated after it was sent to them
- They say they found out pot was being sold from the home, and raided it
- Kenneth White, 49, and Terry Brown, 23, were arrested on gun and drug charges
- An assault rifle, two handguns, a shotgun and body armor were also found
- Cops are now investigating the other men who appear in the clip

By James Wilkinson For Dailymail.com

First they were captured on camera, then they were captured by cops.

Two men were arrested in Huntsville, Alabama at 5am Tuesday after police were sent a gunfightthemed manneguin challenge video that was posted on Facebook in November.

The resulting investigation saw cops bringing in the men on gun and drug charges, as well as finding four guns, body armor, packs of marijuana and ammo, WHNT reported.

Dangerous mannequin challenge shows several people aiming guns



Challenge: A manneguin challenge video - in which the camera moves around people who try to stay 'frozen' - in Huntsville Alabama (pictured) led to arrests early Tuesday morning









Charged: Kenneth White (left), 49, and Terry Brown (right), 23, were arrested in the raid on the house where it was filmed. Both face drug charges and White faces a drug charge

The video, which shows 19 people - most with guns - posing in a freeze-framed 'shootout', was posted on the Facebook profile of Hailey Nichols on November 9. It has since received more than four million views.



Spotted: White is seen here in the video, which was posted on Nov 9. Brown doesn't appear to be in the clip. Police investigated after being concerned about guns in the film

Among those viewers were Madison County Sheriff's Office investigators, who were sent the video by a concerned citizen.

'You have a lot of people with firearms at one address,' Captain Mike Salomonsky said. 'And you have to ask yourself the question, "Why?" and the second question you have to ask

yourself: Is it a public safety issue?'

During the ensuing investigation, police say, they discovered that the house was being used to sell marijuana, and obtained a search warrant.

The raid this morning saw the door being busted in and Kenneth White, 49, and Terry Brown, 23, being arrested. There were four others inside, including kids, cops said.

Items recovered included two handguns, an assault rifle, an older single-barrel shotgun, an attack vest, multiple packs of marijuana, ammunition, magazines for the assault rifle and a computer.

White was charged with first degree possession of marijuana and 'certain persons forbidden to possess a firearm' - a charge that forbids convicted felons from owning a gun.

Brown was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, loitering and promoting prison contraband.

The contraband charge came after he was taken to the main prison facility, at which point he was 'found to have marijuana on his person', Salomonsky said.



Armed: The clip shows 19 people, most armed, enacting a shoot-out. Police found an assault rifle, two handguns, a shotgun, packs of marijuana, an attack vest and ammunition in the home

Brown can be seen in the mannequin challenge video, which was filmed outside the home at 5012 Powell Drive. The camera comes in close on his face while he hefts a pistol.

An assault rifle and shotguns can also be

seen in the video, in which the majority of the 19 subjects are armed.

The investigation continues, Salomonsky said, and more charges may be served.

'There are several persons in the video who may be convicted felons,' he said. 'So, we're going to try to do some identification, work with the ATF and see if we can generate any charges out of that.'





More to come: Police say more arrests will follow in the wake of the video, which has now been watched more than 4million times

Read more:

- Gun-wielding Alabama Mannequin Challenge leads to 2 arrests; weapons and drugs seized | AL.com
- Authorities arrest several

people after Mannequin Challenge video leads them to home with guns, drugs inside | WHNT.com

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Alien hunters claim they've found a dead woman on Mars

By Rachel Bishop 14:01, 6 NOV 2016 Updated 15:39, 6 NOV 2016 News

dailyrecord.co.uk

UFO fans have described the bizarre spot as "the find of the century" and they insist is it human-like species



Alien hunters claim this image shows a dead woman wearing a dress sprawled out on Mars.

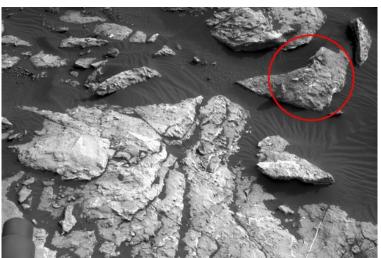
UFO fans have described the bizarre spot as "the find of the century" after it was shared on a conspiracy blog.

Alien obsessive Scott C. Waring shared the picture on UFO Sightings Daily - and included a colourised a version to highlight the female

shape.

Scott wrote: "This is one of the few carvings I have found on Mars that depict a human-like species.

"I have found hundreds, but never looking human, and her dress is raised up in the front, and longer in the back, much like the ladies used to wear back in the 1700s here on Earth."



The strange sight was spotted a few weeks after conspiracy theorists claimed to have spotted an 'alien missile' on the moon.

They believed a picture - thought to have been taken on July 20, 1969 during the Apollo 11 mission to the moon - showed the mystery aircraft flying over the celestial body.

It was featured in a YouTube video on the Paranornal Crucible channel - a common destination for bizarre conspiracy theories and supposed UFO sightings.

The video was posted earlier this month and has already notched up over 100,000 views.

"Bizarre image from the Apollo archives which appears to show a missile type UFO cruising across the moon," reads the explanation under the video.

"Could NASA be bombing alien installations on the lunar surface, possibly using high tech ships from the secret space program. Very odd object, not convinced its an alien craft, more likely something we launched, but at who and why."

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Animal fat in new £5 note branded 'disrespectful'



13:42Tuesday 29 November 2016

The use of animal fat in the new £5 note has been branded "disrespectful" as a petition against the inclusion of tallow reaches 5,000 signatures.

Fury among vegetarians and vegans erupted following confirmation by the Bank of England that the new polymer notes, released in September, contain the suet derivative.

Doug Maw, of Keswick in Cumbria, started a petition against the use of tallow in the new £5 notes, which has garnered 5,000 signatures, and said he has been left "disgusted".

"I understand old notes contain stuff as well - we can't do anything about what is in circulation - but the fact they are producing new ones is what really riles me," he told the Press Association.

"There is no excuse for it. There has got to be other ways of making money without using animal products."

The 47-year-old hotel worker, who has been a vegan for 20 years, said he will "absolutely" be boycotting and "refusing" the new notes.

Thousands have signed the petition since its creation on Monday. Mr Maw said he was "surprised" by how many people have committed their name to it.

"I don't think anything will happen about what has already been made, but I just hope they produce new ones without using animal fats," he said.

"It is the Bank of England - can't they come up with something a little bit more modern? Now there's a huge amount of people that eat a plant-based diet or are vegan. They are not just disrespecting a tiny minority."

On the use of tallow, he said: "It is incredibly disrespectful - we have no choice with money. We have to use it. They issue it through ATMs and hand them to us in shops.

"If we refuse them and they haven't got anything else, what are we going to do? Basically, we are being forced to have animal products on us."

He said he has started a second petition on the UK Government petition site, which is awaiting authorisation, in a bid to get the issue debated and addressed.

A spokeswoman from the Bank of England said: "We can confirm that the polymer pellet from which the base substrate is made contains a trace of a substance known as tallow.

"Tallow is derived from animal fats (suet) and is a substance that is also widely used in the manufacture of candles and soap."

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Jen Mills for Metro.co.ukThursday 17 Nov 2016 5:51 pm



Explain this one (Picture: Northpix)

Alright, all you sceptics. Listen up.

Someone has taken a picture of Loch Ness, showing a long streak of bubbles breaking the surface of the water, exactly as if a creature was thrashing beneath.

Steve Frame, 50, noticed the

strange sight as he drove past his house in Drumnadrochit and had to stop to find out more.

'There were no boats about and it definitely wasn't a seal, a bird or a fish. It was much too big for that,' he told the



Steve won't be fooled (Picture: Northpix)

'I often see strange things on the loch as I travel the A82 road every day. But this is the first time I have seen anything like this.

'I am not saying it is Nessie because I don't know. My heart says I am a believer but my head says no, but there is no doubt that something strange is in the loch.'

He said he was not convinced that it was a prehistoric animal – but despite that, he thinks that something unexpected lurks beneath the

surface.

Nessie hunter Steve Feltham, who examined the images, said: 'For a long time people have been afraid to talk publicly about what they have seen.

Mysterious ripples (Picture: Northpix)

'But here we have a local resident, who lives overlooking the water, daring to stick his neck out, with absolutely nothing to gain, and say 'look, I don't know what I have photographed, but I think it warrants closer examination'.'

He said he couldn't say whether this particular photo showed Nessie or something more prosaic.



Sure, it *could* be just the wind, a seal or a strange movement of the current... But would you go swimming in there to find out?

MetroUK
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Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukWednesday 30 Nov 2016 10:13 am



The phantom parlour pooer (Picture: Mercury)

Either this guy got caught short or he regretted his choice of tattoo.

He was filmed defecating on the doorstep of a tattoo parlour despite being in view of a busy road while people were driving to work.

Workers at Guns & Tattoos
Custom Tattoo and Piercing Studio

in the village of Lucan, County Dublin, had to clear up after his six-second dump.

Stephen Dowling, 18, who opened the shop that day, said: 'It absolutely stank. I couldn't believe it. It was disgusting.

'It was me who found it, I thought it might have been an animal or something. I walked up to open the shop at around midday and there it was – a shit against the wall.

A commuter poos outside shop

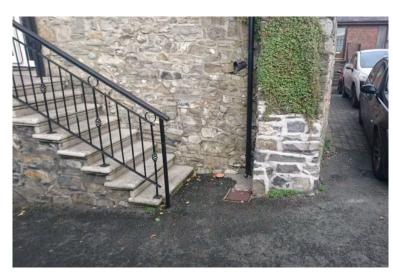


'Straight away I went to look at the CCTV and I couldn't find it at first because I was searching through the night. We thought it was a phantom shitter.

'Eventually I spotted it just before 7.30am. There's a main road with shops on it about 10 yards away. Cars would have been driving past.

'We've no idea who it was or where he came from. The only thing we thought of was that he must have been going home after a sesh.

'You'd have to be pretty steaming to think it was acceptable to do what he did. He was up and away in no time, six or seven seconds.



The scene of the crime (Picture: Mercury)

'I was pretty angry because I'm the one who had to clear it up. The smell was just the worst.'

Stephen, an apprentice tattooist, hosed down the damage before opening the studio, which has been in business for four years, later that day.

He said customers were in shock after he informed them of the vile incident.

Stephen said: 'Everyone's just being saying that it's disgusting. You don't expect to come to work and have to deal with that.

'I've never seen anything like it before. I'm not sure what makes someone so desperate that they can't hold on until they reach a toilet.

'Thankfully I've managed to give the place a good wash and you wouldn't have known it happened.

'I'll never forget the smell of it. It was completely vile.'

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Assassins repeatedly tried and failed to kill Castro over the decades

usatoday.com Trevor Hughes, USA TODAY



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Assassins repeatedly tried and failed to kill Castro over the decades



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This May 1, 1960, photo from a May Day rally in Havana shows Fidel Castro in his prime, at a time when CIA operatives were preparing to assassinate him. They failed.(Photo: AP)

A thorn in the side of the American government for decades. Fidel Castro survived numerous assassination attempts by spies, mobsters and political opponents, and he often joked that if surviving such attacks was an Olympic sport, he'd have a gold medal.

Cuban officials say Castro survived more than 600 attempts on his life, including repeated efforts by the

CIA. Among the reported methods: exploding cigars, a toxic wetsuit and even a poisoned chocolate milkshake arranged by U.S. government officials with the help of the Mafia.

The U.S. government doesn't generally discuss its assassination efforts, but records made public by the CIA explain how agents planned to poison Castro in early 1960s with a "gangster-type action."

At the time, the mob was suffering financial losses because Castro was shutting down their casinos. CIA officials met up with two prominent Mafia members and connected with Cuban-based men who were willing to take the risk.

"(He) suggested that they not resort to firearms, but if he could be furnished with some type of potent pill that could be placed in Castro's food or drink, it would be a much more effective operation," the CIA documents show. "After several weeks of reported attempts, (the operative) apparently got cold feet and asked out of the assignment." Another operative also tried and failed, and the CIA reported retrieving the botulism pills.

The scandal surrounding the assassination attempts on Castro and other foreign leaders — as revealed by newspaper reporters — prompted Congress to create the Church Committee to investigate abuses of power and led to the 1976 intelligence reforms by President Gerald Ford that included a ban on political assassinations. The Church Committee's report offered, in stark language, clear evidence the U.S. government had repeatedly tried to kill Castro, after first

attempting to weaken him politically by trying to make his beard fall out or dose him with a chemical to make him babble during a radio address.

"We have found concrete evidence of at least eight plots involving the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro from 1960 to 1965," the committee reported. "The proposed assassination devices ran the gamut from high-powered rifles to poison pills, poison pens, deadly bacterial powders and other devices which strain the imagination."

Among those devices: an exploding sea shell, a wetsuit laced with a fungus that would infect Castro's skin and a breathing mask dusted with botulism, according to the committee's investigation. The committee said some of the efforts never made it past the planning stage.

In 1975, Castro gave the U.S. government a list of what he claimed were 24 American-sponsored assassination attempts on his life. The Church Committee investigated and decided none of those were authentic, but found eight other attempts it deemed credible.

The attempts on Castro's life didn't end with Ford's order: In 2000, former CIA operative Luis Posada was arrested and charged with planting explosives beneath a podium where Castro was to speak at a summit in Panama. Castro's security detail found the explosives, but Posada was pardoned in 2004 by then-Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso and he fled to the United States. Posada has been linked to the 1976 bombing of a Cubana flight in which 73 people were killed. including 24 members of the Cuban national fencing team.

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Astronauts in space spooked by mystery knocking sound that no one can explain

By Chris kitching 15:09, 29 NOV 2016 Updated 16:56, 29 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

One astronaut said the unexplained noises left him feeling very nervous and he couldn't see anything out of the ordinary when he looked into the vast emptiness of space



Chinese astronaut Yang Liwei sits in the module of his spaceship during his flight in 2003 (Photo: China.org.cn) Mr Yang says the cause of the strange noises has never been established

China's first astronaut says he heard mysterious knocks during his first flight in space - but no one has been able to explain the cause of them.

Astronaut Yang Liwei said the strange noises left him feeling very nervous and he looked out into the vast emptiness of space but couldn't see anything out of the ordinary.

Mr Yang, now a major general in China's Air Force, said it sounded like someone was knocking the body of the spaceship, comparing the noise to that of a hammer hitting an iron bucket.

The 51-year-old's unexplained experience has raised all kinds of theories, including aliens, and he said he has never heard the sound again since returning to earth.



iron bucket with a wooden hammer.

In 2003 Mr Yang became the first person sent into space by the Chinese space programme, orbiting earth several times during a 21-hour flight.

He recalled the experience in a recent interview, telling Chinese media the mysterious knocking sounds occurred without rhyme or reason.

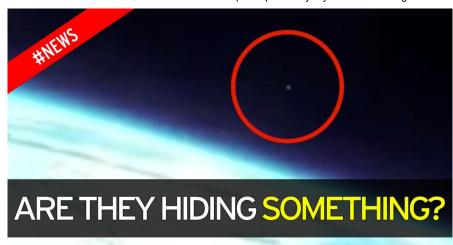
He said: "A non-causal situation I have met in space is a knock that appeared from time to time.

"It neither came from outside nor inside the spaceship, but sounded like someone is knocking the body of the spaceship just as knocking an

Mr Yang revealed he was very nervous when he heard the sounds and moved close to the spaceship's porthole to investigate the cause.

He failed to see anything out of the ordinary.

When he returned to earth he explained the noises to officials with the space programme and tried to imitate it with instruments.



The sound has also been heard by Chinese astronauts who have since been blasted into space.

Mr Yang said: "Before entering space I have told them that the sound is a normal phenomenon, so there is no need to worry."

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Video thumbnail, ISS live feed cuts just as a UFO travels past earth in mysterious footage

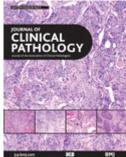
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Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process

Authors pull two papers about faulty glucose meters after industry prompts

with 4 comments



Two papers evaluating glucose meters — used by diabetics to monitor blood sugar levels — suggested that a couple of the devices don't work as well as they should. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the companies that sell those meters objected to how the studies were conducted. By all accounts, the companies appear to be justified in their complaints.

In both cases, researchers used blood drawn from veins to test the meters. But manufacturers of the WaveSense JAZZ and GlucoRx glucose meters said their devices are designed to work with fresh blood from a finger-prick. Both papers have now been retracted.

The <u>retraction notice</u> for "Technical and clinical accuracy of five blood glucose meters: clinical impact assessment using error grid analysis and insulin sliding scales," published in 2015 in the *Journal of Clinical Pathology*, hints at the issue:

This article has been retracted at the authors' request pending investigation of comments about the methodology used in the research.

(Although <u>retraction guidelines</u> from the Committee on Publication Ethics recommend leaving retracted articles online, but marked retracted, it appears the original article is no longer online.)

We learned how the error came to light from co-author <u>Hannah Lise Sutheran</u>, affiliated with Queen's Hospital in the UK. She says the paper was retracted:

due to a [methodological] error that was clear when it was explained by the manufacturer. The methodology error that the manufacturer of the blood glucose meter outlined was not evident in any of their literature so the error was not noticed until after initial publication, the referees of the article also did not pick up on this error due to lack of evidence or literature. Since the retraction and removal of the erroneous data, the article has been re-published as a cut down version so as not to invalidate the data we reported. The authors of the paper instigated the retraction of the paper as soon as we were made aware of the problem.

We asked Sutheran for more details on the error that felled the original paper. She said:

I used venous samples preserved in EDTA but the wave sense jazz and code free meters require oxygen in sample to provide accurate results (which is ok for patients as they use capillary finger

prick blood) but for purposes of laboratory evaluation of systems preserved samples were used. These were the only manufacturers not to provide suitability of sample types in their literature. When the company director of wave sense jazz met the coauthor it was explained that the problem could not have been foreseen due to their lack of evidence to the contrary and he admitted this wasn't the first paper he had instigated retractions for due to the same issue with sample type.

Parts of the paper are still accurate, though. Co-author <u>Tim Reynolds</u>, also affiliated with Queen's Hospital, explained that not all meters require a lot of oxygen in the blood sample to work properly. The authors republished the analysis, excluding the <u>WaveSense JAZZ</u> and <u>CodeFree</u> meters, which did require the fresh samples; "<u>Technical and clinical accuracy of three blood glucose meters</u>: <u>clinical impact assessment using error grid analysis and insulin sliding scales</u>" now appears in the same journal as the original article.

A spokesperson for the WaveSense JAZZ meter's manufacturer, <u>AgaMatrix Europe Limited</u>, told us that he could not comment on whether the company had instigated retractions of other papers.

A similar methodological problem felled another 2014 paper, which also initially reported problems with a specific glucose meter not working after testing it on the wrong kind of samples. Again, the company objected:

After "System Accuracy Evaluation of the GlucoRx Nexus Voice TD-4280 Blood Glucose Monitoring System" was published in *Disease Markers*, the CEO of GlucoRx published a comment in the journal explaining that the study:

uses an inappropriately designed and uncontrolled evaluation protocol which cannot be used to demonstrate a blood glucose meter's accuracy and draw valid conclusions regarding compliance with ISO 15197:2013 standards.

The comment suggests that there are several methodology issues with the study, including one with the blood samples used:

Although the evaluation compares "like with like" samples, it uses venous blood rather than fresh capillary whole blood samples as specified for accuracy studies in the ISO standard

After the comment, the authors retracted the study with this notice:

The paper has been retracted upon the authors' request, as the routine hospital laboratory evaluation protocol used varied from recommended best practice study design. Although this protocol established the fact that GlucoRx Nexus Voice system was clinically accurate, it could not be used to make valid analytical accuracy statements relating to ISO 15197 standards. GlucoRx Nexus meters are now the formulary choice in the area.

The paper, published in 2014, has not been cited.

Emails to first author <u>Muhammad Khan</u> at the University of Liverpool, and <u>Frank Joseph</u>, at the University of Chester, bounced back.

Like Retraction Watch? Consider making a <u>tax-deductible contribution to support our growth</u>. You can also follow us <u>on Twitter</u>, like us <u>on Facebook</u>, add us to your <u>RSS reader</u>, sign up on our <u>homepage</u> for an email every time there's a new post, or subscribe to our <u>new daily digest</u>. Click <u>here to review our Comments Policy</u>. For a sneak peek at what we're working on, <u>click here</u>.

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Written by Shannon Palus

November 16th, 2016 at 12:00 pm

Posted in <u>biomedcentral, company complaints, data issues, diabetes, Disease Markers, freely available, hindawi, journal of clinical pathology, methodological problems, uk retractions</u>

« <u>Nature Cell Bio paper may be headed for retraction</u>
<u>Authors retract paper lacking approval to study asthma in athletes</u> »
Comments



Warrick November 16, 2016 at 1:48 pm

Would this not have been better dealt with as a letter to the editor and/or correction? This way there remains considerable potential for future researchers to miss these apparently very significant methodological issues.

Reply Link Quote



salvadore November 16, 2016 at 3:49 pm

The problem with accuracy of glucose meters is well known. Many published papers would have to retracted because of data was based on inaccurate glucose meters.

Reply Link Quote



Ralph Giorno MD November 16, 2016 at 9:01 pm

Gee those peer reviewers did a bang up job, has none of these people ever seen a glucose meter in actual use in a clinic or hospital ward? They really think patients get a venipuncture and stick blood in a meter at home? Simply unbelievable.

Reply Link Quote

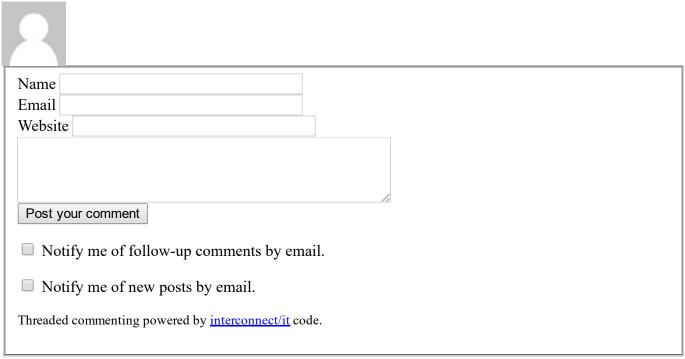


Marcus November 17, 2016 at 3:14 pm

As a US Psychologist with type 2 diabetes for 14 years I am incredulous. The authors stated that: "The methodology error that the manufacturer of the blood glucose meter outlined was not evident in any of their literature..." I checked out the online First Time User Guide for both the GlucoRX and Wave Sense Jazz, and both had clear illustrations of how to stick your finger.

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Baby monkey tries (and fails) to clean the spots off Dalmatian

Ashitha Nagesh for Metro.co.ukFriday 25 Nov 2016 3:12 pm



Baby monkey tries (and fails) to clean the spots off Dalmatian

Aw silly Pepé (Picture: Caters)

An adorable (albeit not very bright) baby monkey keeps trying to scrub the spots off a Dalmatian.

Pepé Le Pew, a tiny Vervet monkey from Zimbabwe, was rescued by the Free to be Wild sanctuary when he was just four days old. As his mother had been shot at the farm he lived on, Indigo the dog has stepped in to become his surrogate mum

Since then, Pepé has been in awe of Indigo's black spots – playing with them and often trying to scratch them off.

And like a cheeky baby, he also climbs all over Indigo and pulls her tail while she's trying to sleep.

Small monkey tries to wipe the spots off of a dalmation



Baye Pigors, who founded the primate sanctuary, said the Dalmatian is the 'perfect surrogate mother'.

White man shoots black teenager dead and tells police 'that's another piece of trash off the street'

'Indigo has grown up with all kinds of wild animals and loves to look after the babies,' she added.

'She is so kind and gentle and extremely patient – I think this is because she is completely deaf.

'They love to be together. Pepé has tried to scratch the spots off her many times. I think it's because he can see the colour variation and the spots are something he can pick up.'

Indigo is his surrogate mum (Picture: Caters)

Baye added that the bond of friendship between the two was 'instant', and that since then they love to play together.

'Pepé was only four days old on arrival with no teeth and took an instant liking to Indigo, who is quite large compared to him,' she said.



'His mom was shot on a farm leaving him orphaned and we are raising him with the hope to introduce him to our troop and one day release him.

'Indigo is my shadow and I knew she would be fine with Pepé.'

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You can now get hot chocolate topped with a blooming marshmallow flower

metro.co.uk

Ellen Scott for Metro.co.ukFriday 18 Nov 2016 10:12 am



You can now get hot chocolate topped with a blooming marshmallow flower

Whoa. (Picture: metro.co.uk)

If there's one good thing about how bloody freezing it is right now (other than finally being able to wear your giant coat), it's that it's the perfect time to drink endless amounts of hot chocolate.

But you know what? You really should stop settling for that brown water you call instant hot choc.

You deserve so much more.

You deserve the fanciest hot chocolate, in

fact. You deserve hot chocolate that's straight up magical.

Behold the hot chocolate you're searching for.



Picture: Ellen Scott/metro.co.uk)



(Picture: Ellen Scott/metro.co.uk)

Dominique Ansel – creator of the Cronut and cookie shots – has just made a true hot choc masterpiece.

Dominique's Blossoming Hot Chocolate is topped with a marshmallow flower held closed by a small, thin ring of white chocolate.

The marshmallow, pre-hot-chocolate. (Picture: Ellen Scott/metro.co.uk)

When the marshmallow flower is dropped into the warm hot chocolate, the ring melts, allowing the flower to beautifully bloom inside the cup.

Marshmallow flowers will make your drinks fancy af

It's very soothing to watch, and then you get the joy of actually drinking marshmallow topped hot chocolate afterwards. Which is always a delight.

Just FYI, though, the hot chocolate itself is very rich and chocolate-y, so it might be worth getting a drink of water on the side.

Picture: Ellen Scott/metro.co.uk



If you fancy trying Blossoming Hot Chocolate for yourself, it's available at Dominique Ansel Bakery in London now.

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Picture: Ellen Scott/metro.co.uk)

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Medieval BOMMY-KNOCKER is handed over during police weapons amnesty

06:17 EST, 21 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

- Officers in Bedfordshire took part in national campaign to seize weapons
- But among the knives and guns handed in, was a metal medieval flail
- Police say the weapon, as well as others handed in, will now be crushed

By Richard Spillett, Crime Correspondent For Mailonline

Police were shocked when someone handed in a medieval-style 'bommy-knocker' during a guns and knives amnesty.

Officers in Bedford allowed members of the public to hand in weapons without fear of prosecution as part of a campaign to take items of the streets.

Along with the handguns and blades which were handed in however, was the gruesome-looking metal flail like those thought to have been used by warriors in the Middle Ages.



This medieval-style flail was handed in to police in Bedfordshire during a weapons amnesty



Police were also given around 2,000 knives and a cattleprod, all of which will be destroyed

The fearsome weapon, along with 2,000 knives and an assortment of guns collected by the police, will now be destroyed to ensure they do not end up in the hands of criminals.

Bedfordshire's Sergeant Ben Dimmock said: 'While we get used to seeing all kinds of things handed in during these campaigns, the flail was a particularly gruesome piece of equipment capable of inflicting serious injuries of worse. It is now in the best place for it – the crusher.'

As part of a nation-wide campaign called Operation Sceptre, forces around the country are urging people to hand in their so-called 'zombie knives' - those which have a serrated edge - which were recently banned.

Earlier this month, a metre-long sword was handed in at a police station in Plymouth, while a samural sword was handed in in Hinkley, Leicestershire

Sgt Dimmock added: 'Our message to those carrying knives is bin the blade before it's too late.

'We will come down hard on those responsible for knife crime and they will face serious punishment. They are putting lives at risk – including their own.'

WHAT IS A FLAIL AND WERE THEY EVER USED AS WEAPONS?

Early illustrations of flail-like weapons

Flails are weapons consisting of a handle, chain and spiked ball or striking head believed to have been used during combat in the medieval Europe.

Some historians believe they were hardly ever actually employed during fighting and their prevalence has been exaggerated in art, cartoons and films for dramatic effect.

However, manuscripts from German combat manuscripts suggest they may have been used as peasant weapons, suggesting they may have been modified from farming instruments.

Flails, also known as 'bommy-knockers' and 'morning stars', are also thought to have been used in 10th and 11th century eastern Europe and what is now Russia.



Comments (

max the dog, liverpool, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Mostly the contents of the kitchen drawer the real knives are still out there they will be used to slice the turkey now!

fleabittenrangebum, Vista Blanco, United States, about 3 hours ago

Hooligan weapon of choice?

gonzo9, Atlanta, about 5 hours ago

None of those guns would be of any harm to the police. They present more danger to the person that pulled the trigger. What is the red disc under the rifle? Do you get credit for turning in a hockey puck?

D.Lareme, Golden West, United States, about 6 hours ago

A Ginsu knife, no way! Don't you get thirty of those for an amazingly low price, and if you act now, you'll receive the bamboo steamer.

PattiFromTexas, Ft. Worth, United States, about 2 hours ago

Hey, I still have my two Ginsus, and yes they are still sharp some 25 or 30 years later. No kidding.

Corbs, Somerset, about 7 hours ago

Potentially they could re cycle 90% of these to a charity shop lacking kitchen knives. There's a lovely ham knife in there.

NolongerGB, London, United Kingdom, about 8 hours ago

Funny how the police have out safety labels on you cap guns ??

Ace High, Northampton, United Kingdom, about 8 hours ago

good job they handed in the tin opener.

The DM Hype Watch, Not falling for DiM Hype, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Still think police don't need tasers DM?

Adge Cutler, Leicester, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

That flail looks like it would be hazard to the person using it, with it's short handle.

Brett, Somewhere in England I think, about 9 hours ago

My finger nails need cutting I don't suppose there is a set of pocket nail clippers amongst that lot is there. Those little fold away nail files are deadly things

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By Eric DuVall | Nov. 25, 2016 at 2:46 PM



A jury member taste a beer during the 5th Brussels Beer Challenge in Brussels, Belgium, on Nov. 5. A brewery group from Belgium has applied to UNESCO to seek official cultural recognition for the nation's beer brewing and drinking traditions. Photo by Julien Warnard/European Press Agency

BRUSSELS, Nov. 25 (UPI) -- In Belgium, beer drinking is serious business -- and could soon be a recognized part of the European nation's cultural contributions to the world.

Belgium has applied to have its beer culture listed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List. The somewhat obscure international list created in 2006 already has more than 300 places and traditions on it, including the Great Wall of China and Tanzania's Stone Town in Zanzibar.

The list is meant to afford international recognition and protection for cultural heritage from UNESCO member-states.

In its application, the Belgian brewery association noted beer consumption goes beyond drinking alcohol for the side effect of intoxication and is a national rite of passage.

"It plays a role in daily life, as well as festive occasions," the Belgian application states, "Almost 1,500 types of beer are produced in the country including by some Trappist [monk] communities."

The petition was submitted by the German-speaking portion of the Belgian population on behalf of all three linguistic communities in the country. It was endorsed by French- and Dutch-speaking brewers, as well.

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Billy Purvis - a forgotten Midlothian character

midlothianadvertiser.co.uk



22:00Thursday 17 March 2016

Bill Purvis (1784-1853) is now almost completely unknown but in the first half of the 19th century he was the most famous entertainer and circus clown in the north of England and southern Scotland, writes Dr Ken Bogle (Midlothian Council Local Studies).

William "Billy" Purvis is associated with the north-east of England but was a native of Midlothian. He was born in Auchendinny in January 1784, the son of a tailor.

Family legend has it that Billy and his twin brother John were born in a terrible snowstorm and that his father had to carry the midwife home on his back.

Billy was a natural performer, perhaps a bit of a show-off, and knew how to sing and dance from an early age.

When Billy was a child, his family moved to Newcastle upon Tyne where Billy was apprenticed to become a joiner. Although he completed his apprenticeship, his heart was never in it and he soon turned to performing.

He was partly inspired by seeing travelling shows and performers at Dalkeith fair and by listening to the stories of soldiers and prisoners of war at Greenlaw Barracks, near Penicuik.

Billy went to on to become the greatest circus clown and performer of his age. His act often took place in the open air and drew large crowds, especially at agricultural fairs across the north-east of England and Scotland.

Billy was one of the great all-rounders: he told jokes, danced, sang traditional songs and ballads, performed magic tricks and illusions, played the bagpipes and drums, and acted out short plays.

He became a household name and a celebrity. His fame was such that a small statue of him, often doubling as a pepper pot, was once as common in working-class households as two china dogs on the mantelpiece or a "wag at the wa" pendulum clock.

Billy established his own theatre company and it has been claimed that he was the first to use the term "Geordie" for the natives of Newcastle.

Billy retained a great love for Midlothian throughout his life. He bought a house for two of his maiden aunts in Auchendinny and called in to see them whenever he was in the area.

Billy died in December 1853 and was buried in St Hilda's Church in Hartlepool, where his grave may still be seen: "the Jester of the North".

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"Binocular man" has been found looking out over Thames from the town's monument.

The steel pipe sculpture made by Bruce Harper went missing recently, taken from the Thames Coastal Walkway where it looked for fishing boats.

Following a story in the *Hauraki Herald* last Friday, Harper said he was called by a man walking his

dog who had found the sculpture "scanning the town" from the top of a rubbish bin at the Thames monument.



"It would appear whoever took him had a sense of humour,"
Harper said.

"I think the publicity must have got to the person who had it so they put it somewhere where it would be found."

As soon as he got the call, Harper said he "bolted" up to the monument to reclaim the sculpture.

The sculpture is now safely in Harper's shed awaiting restoration.

"It got so much attention, that particular one, I'm really happy it's back.

"I had a couple of beers with him on Friday night," he said.

The sculpture was in good condition, but had the odd patch of rust that needed to be tidied up, Harper said.



He would also give it a fresh paint job before bolting it back on to the concrete block on the Thames Coastal Walkway in the next few weeks.



Harper said he would also be taking measures to make it more difficult for binocular man to go walk-about again.

"I'll have to try and make it a little bit more secure," he said.

The sculpture was very popular with users of the walkway, who often stopped to take photos, he said.

"I will restore him to his former glory and place him back on his perch

and I hope everybody gets more awesome photos," he said.

The statue is one of a series of sculptures Harper installed to highlight the Thames Coastal Walkway.

Binocular Man was was the second sculpture Harper made and was installed near Victoria Park in Thames about five years ago.

Harper, 64, has made five sculptures so far and intends to make more when he retires. He installed each one in the middle of the night to try and remain anonymous.

The first statue Harper made was a fisherman at Moanataiari, at the old Burke St Wharf. He also made a golf player, croquet player and a tennis player.

There was also a cat on Forest & Bird's Karaka Bird Hide in Brown St, but it was taken down.

- Stuff

bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

28 November 2016



The swan was unveiled on Monday but didn't last long

Image copyrightWeibo/WentianGuanshi

A black swan sculpture in Beijing's financial district has been removed only hours after being unveiled because of concerns it might bring bad luck to the markets, it's reported.

On Monday, the huge swan was placed inside the entrance of a swanky shopping centre located across the road from China's Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC). It sat there for half a day before being covered up and whisked away by shopping mall staff, Beijing's Fazhi Wanbao newspaper reports.

In financial circles, a "black swan" represents a highly unlikely and unpredictable event - something not much loved by investors. It's not clear whether anyone from the CSRC complained about the swan's presence, or if the shopping centre was just erring on the side of caution. But it wouldn't be the first time a sculpture has alarmed the commission.

In June, a statue of a popular cartoon bear was removed from outside the same shopping centre after officials complained that it appeared to be sticking its middle finger up at the CSRC building. The choice of animal probably didn't help - the term "bear market" refers to falling share prices and widespread selling.

Many Chinese social media users think the swan's removal is an overreaction and see it as market traders throwing their weight around. "This mall is private property, they can put up what they like!" one person writes on microblogging site Weibo. "They're suffering from paranoia," another remarks, while one user thinks the traders must lack confidence in their own abilities if they think a shopping centre statue holds that much sway over the markets.

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Bomb find leads to evacuation in Berlin neighbourhood

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Bomb find leads to evacuation in Berlin neighbourhood

The Local · 24 Nov 2016, 15:45

Published: 24 Nov 2016 15:45 GMT+01:00 Updated: 24 Nov 2016

15:45 GMT+01:00

The discovery of a 250kg Second World War bomb in southwest Berlin led to an evacuation of a hospital, a kindergarten and a care home on Thursday afternoon.

The Russian bomb was discovered during initial building work on an apartment block in the Zehlendorf neighbourhood on Thursday morning, the Berliner Morgenpost reports.

Police immediately cordoned off the surrounding streets while a bomb disposal unit arrived on the scene.

An appraisal of the situation then led police to evacuate an area within a 250-metre circumference of the find, with officers going house-to-house asking people to leave their homes.

As the find was in a wealthy neighbourhood of detached houses, only 500 residents are affected by the evacuation which started at around 2pm.

But among the buildings being evacuated are a kindergarten, a care home and a hospital. A total of 120 patients are being relocated from the Helios Clinic, a private hospital which is situated in the evacuation zone.

Police aim to have the evacuation finished by 4.30pm so that the bomb can be diffused an hour later.

Many bombs dropped during the Second World War still lie unexploded under German cities and are discovered during excavations for construction work.

In September several thousand people were evacuated in Cologne when a bomb was discovered in the Riehl neighbourhood.

Sofia Petkar for Metro.co.ukSaturday 26 Nov 2016 10:53 am

WARNING: GRAPHIC IMAGES BELOW



Boy miraculously survives being impaled through the neck arteries.

The boy held himself up by the arms for ten minutes before help arrived (Picture: Natarit Noonpradate/SWNS)

A young boy in Thailand has miraculously survived impaling himself through the neck while trying to jump a metal gate.

Schoolboy Tharathep Wanacharoenlap was attempting to climb over the railings to see his friend when he slipped at the top.

One of the rusty spikes speared his neck – but by some stroke of luck, it missed his



Passers-by held the boy steady to take some weigh off his injury (Picture: Natarit Noonpradate/SWNS)

The 11-year-old managed to hold himself up by the arms for an incredible ten minutes – escaping further injury and what would have been a pretty horrific fall – before passers-by came to his aid.

Emergency services in

Chachoengsao managed to cut him free with the metal still embedded in his neck and

rushed him to hospital, where he is said to have given nurses a thumbs-up suggesting he is okay.



Rescue workers finally cut him free with the metal still embedded in his neck (Picture: Natarit Noonpradate/SWNS)

The boy apparently climbs the gate every day to see his friend – who is too lazy to walk 800 metres to open it.

However, recent days had seen rainstorms, leaving the railings rather wet and causing him to lose his balance.



The schoolboy gave nurses a thumbs-up suggesting he is okay.
br />(Picture: Natarit Noonpradate/SWNS)

Tharathep is still recovering in hospital after the accident and medics say he should be released within the next few days without any life changing injuries.

Once home, we hope his friend will finally take pity and start letting him in through the door.

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Has Hitler's lost gold hoard been discovered in the Baltic sea?

11:25 EST, 28 November 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk



Has Hitler's lost £100 MILLION gold hoard been discovered in the Baltic sea? British diver claims sunken treasure is aboard sunken Nazi vessel

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- German warship the MV Wilhelm Gustloff was sunk by the Soviets in 1945
- Diver Phil Sayers believes it may have had

Hitler's lost gold stash on board

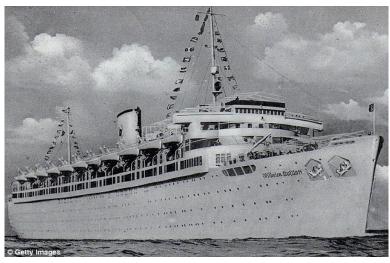
- He says a survivor had earlier seen crates being loaded on to the ship
- There have been numerous searches to find the missing gold hoard

By Jennifer Newton for MailOnline

A British diver has claimed that Hitler's lost £100million gold hoard is lying in a shipwreck at the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

The Nazis stole millions of pounds worth of art and gold during the Second World War but much of it has never been found.

Adolf Hitler was said to have accumulated a stash worth to be around £100million and treasure hunters have spent years trying to track down where it is stored.



A British diver has claimed that Hitler's lost £100million gold hoard was loaded on to German warship the Wilhelm Gustloff before it sank in 1945

And now diver Phil Sayer believes the gold may have been on board the German warship the MV Wilhelm Gustloff which lies 450metres at the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

The vessel was sunk by a Soviet torpedo off the coast of Poland in January 1945, which also killed 9,500 sailors on board.

And Mr Sayers, from Essex, claims that Rudi Lange, a survivor who was a radio controller on board the vessel that day, told him he saw crates believed to be carrying the gold, loaded on to the ship.

He told the Daily Star: 'We know from first hand accounts a whole load of lorries turned up alongside and transferred a cargo of high security on board on the ship.

Phil Sayer believes the gold may have been on board the German warship the MV Wilhelm Gustloff which sunk and now lies 450metres at the bottom of the Baltic Sea

The vessel, pictured, was sunk by a Soviet torpedo off the coast of Poland in January 1945, which also killed the 9,500 sailors on board





'Rudi Lange went down onto the quayside to have a smoke and just happened to be there when the gold bullion transport arrived.

'He did not know what was being taken on at first, but it was not until 1972 when he met up with another survivor – who was one of the guards who had been tasked with looking after the gold and he revealed what was in those huge cases.'

Mr Sayers also explained how he explored the vessel on a diving expedition in 1988, where he

saw the vessel had been broken up, which would have left the crates below.

He added that he also saw bars across some of the windows, suggesting that there could have been a strong room on board.



The wreck of the Wilhelm Gustloff, lies of the northern coast of Poland, which belonged to Germany at the time of the Second World War

There has long been a search for the missing art and treasures stolen by the Nazis with one hunt focusing on Walbrzych in southeastern Poland.

Local legend says the Nazis hid a train laden with gold and jewels in a secret tunnel somewhere in the region as they fled the advancing Soviet army at the end of the Second World War.

But earlier this year, treasure hunters' hopes were dashed after they failed to find the fabled Nazi gold train.

Andreas Richter, a German, and Piotr Koper, a Pole - moved in with heavy equipment and dug deep at a site near rail tracks in Walbrzych.

here has long been a search for the missing art and treasures stolen by the Nazis with one hunt focusing on Walbrzych in southeastern Poland, pictured



The pair said last year that they were confident a train was at the site after carrying out scans using earth-penetrating radar.

But the explorers' spokesman, Andrzej Gaik, admitted that 'no train, no tunnel' were found after digging out three pits at a cost of £28,000.

Legend holds that an armed train loaded with treasure disappeared after entering a complex of tunnels under the Owl

Mountains, a secret project known as 'Riese' - or Giant - which the Nazis never finished.

The area belonged to Germany at the time, but has been part of Poland since the borders were moved in the postwar settlement.

Fiona Govan 26 August 2016 13:03 CEST+02:00

A tiny island just off the coast of Menorca has been up for sale by the family that has owned it for more than a century.

A tiny island just off the coast of Menorca has been up for sale by the family that has owned it for more than a century.

Illa d'en Colom, a 58-hectare islet located 200 metres off Menorca's northern coast boasts two sandy beaches, rugged cliffs and woodland.

It also has a 18th century house ripe for renovation and a wooden cabin nestled in the pine forest.

But that isn't all. The island, which is part of s'Albufera des Grau's Natural Park, has a boathouse and a jetty.

According to estate agents Ses Moreres who are offering it for sale for €5.2 million, the island also has a disused mine and the footprint of a house once used by miners that could be rebuilt on the same site.

In the 1700s the island was used as to quarantine a group of 268 soldiers who had been enslaved in Algeria before being returned to Spain after a treaty was struck. As they came from an area infested with the plague the soldiers were required to live on the island until their health was guaranteed.

Three died and a memorial was erected in their honour, and is still standing today.

The island was purchased by Antonio Roca y Varez in 1904 for just 7,850 pesetas (about €47 in today's money) and has been used as a holiday retreat by the same family ever since.



Potential purchasers however should be aware that the island attracts day trippers who come make the short crossing in boats and canoes during the summer months.

The island is also home to a huge colony of seagulls and is home to a species of lizard that is unique to the island.

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'How to sell your soul to the devil'

08:44 news.com.au

'Cannibal teen' Austin Harrouff googled disturbing things before he allegedly killed Michelle Mishcon and John Stevens

November 27, 20163:03am



The Florida university student accused of randomly killing a couple and chewing on the dead man's face had no detectable hallucinogenic drugs in his system.

Picture: AP.

A UNIVERSITY student accused of killing a couple and eating the flesh off the husband's face searched the internet for schizophrenia, hallucinations, and Satan, according to court documents that have been made public.

Friends and family said Austin Harrouff, 19, had been acting strangely before he stormed off during a dinner with his parents on August 15, in Jupiter, Florida.

Harrouff was found later that night in

his underwear making animal noises and biting John Stevens' face after allegedly stabbing him and his wife Michelle Mishcon in their driveway, reports the Daily Mail.



Michelle Mishcon and John Stevens. Picture: Supplied.

Michelle Mishcon and John Stevens. Picture: Supplied. *Source*: Supplied

Investigators released an extensive list of Harrouff's internet searches in the weeks before the killings, which included "I think I'm going crazy am I?", "marijuana withdrawal", "hearing things in my sleep" and "signs of steroids".

More bizarre searches included terms like "positive hypnosis" and "how to sell your soul to the devil".

Police released this image of Austin Harrouff after he tried to eat John Stevens' face off. Picture:

Martin County Attorney's Office Source: Supplied

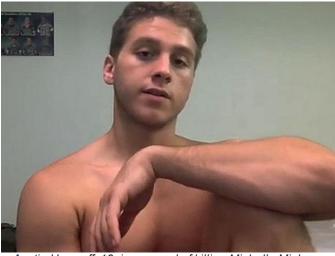
His personal writings dating back to 2013 were also made public, revealing Harrouff had been bullied and felt anxious, depressed and angry.

Harrouff's lawyer Nellie King, said on Wednesday: "Austin is struggling with severe mental illness and the judicial process will bear all of this out in due time."

Austin Harrouff, 19, is accused of killing Michelle Mishcon and John Stevens. Picture:



Police released this image of Austin Harrouff after he tried to eat John Stevens' face off. Picture: Martin County Attorney's Office



Austin Harrouff, 19, is accused of killing Michelle Mishcon and John Stevens. Picture: Supplied.

Supplied. Source: Supplied

While she did not specify the 19-year-old's condition, his father Wade Harrouff previously said in an interview that he believes his son suffers from schizophrenia, which he says runs in his family.

His mother Mina Harrouff also told investigators her son had been acting strangely in the week leading up to the brutal attack.



Austin Harrouff. Picture: Martin County Attorney's Office. Source: Supplied

He called himself an "animal", made comments about being immortal, and watched "self hypnosis videos" on the computer in his bedroom, Mina said.

Anyone experiencing mental health issues should call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

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Austin Harrouff. Picture: Martin County Attorney's Office.

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Car hits deer, deer goes airborne, hits someone walking by

wjactv.com

FILE



By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Friday, November 18th 2016



1280x720_61117P00-EXMIA.png

PHOTO - A car hit a deer, that deer went airborne then hit someone walking by in Tenn. (Photo: Pixabay via MGN Online)

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A deer hit by a car in Tennessee went airborne and struck someone walking by hard enough to break some of the pedestrian's bones.

Clarksville Police spokeswoman Officer Natalie Hall tells**The Leaf-Chronicle** that a driver hit the deer Thursday evening near downtown Clarksville. The animal flew off the car and hit a pedestrian, who was treated at Tennova Healthcare for broken bones.

She added that it's not the type of crash that happens often.

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Cereal offenders: Tony the Tiger begs furries to stop tweeting him porn

Alex Hem

Friday 29 January 2016 Last modified on Friday 25 November 2016

thequardian.com

Kellogg's Frosties mascot asked social media users to 'keep things gr-r-reat' after being inundated with lewd anthropomorphic images



Twitter. Photograph: Alamy

If you think your Thursday was bad, just bear this in mind: someone woke up, went to their job where they pretend to be Kellogg's Frosties' mascot Tony the Tiger on the internet, and had to ask people to stop sending them anthropomorphic animal porn.

The clearly heartfelt plea to "keep things gr-r-reat" came about after an emotional few days for the "furry" community on Twitter.

The definition of the term "furry" is contested, even among Easy tiger ... the Kellogg's mascot has had a tough few days on furries themselves, but it usually refers to the fandom of people who identify with, roleplay as, and usually wear fursuits to

mimic, anthropomorphised cartoon animals. It's not a sex thing. At least, it's not always a sex thing. Basically, if the suave Disney version of Robin Hood – who is a literal fox – spoke to you on a romantic level, you may appreciate where they're coming from.

Of course, as an anthropomorphised cartoon animal, Tony the Tiger is the daddy of all furries, and so there's a fair amount of artwork featuring him. This artwork is not always safe for work. It also seems fair to assume that Kellogg's does not want its brand to be associated with – say – a picture of an extremely muscly Tony, naked save for his neckerchief, masturbating on an exercise bench.

So three days ago Kellogg's started blocking the furries en masse. Even ones who weren't posting porn. Even, it seems, ones who hadn't even said anything to Tony on Twitter.

Some furries gave up tweeting at Tony and found a new hero. Where Tony the Tiger was apparently hostile to their fandom, Chester Cheetah, the anthropomorphic mascot of the Cheetos brand of cheese-esque cornmeal puffs, was much more welcoming, and ended up straight-up flirting with them:

But some stayed with Tony, and essentially ended up DDoSing the account with complaints about the blocking, requests for sex and a lot of porn.

And so, on Thursday, came the plea from Tony that: "Cubs could be watching." The porn hasn't fully stopped, but for the past day the rate of posting has declined somewhat.

Which is, I guess, gr-r-reat.

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Child survives hanging at Uptown day care; provider flees, is caught

Raymond Grumney last updated

startribune.com

Suspect fled, hitting at least 3 people with her vehicle. **By Paul Walsh** and **Libor Jany** Star Tribune staff writers November 18, 2016 — 8:53pm

A south Minneapolis day-care worker was arrested Friday for allegedly hanging a 16-month-old boy in her charge. The child was rescued, but the day-care worker fled, initiating a chase that sent three people to the hospital and ended with passers-by and police preventing her from jumping off an overpass.

The toddler, who was enrolled at Uptown Daycare in the 2700 block of Humboldt Avenue S., in the East Isles neighborhood, was reportedly found hanging by a parent who was dropping off a child, police said. Police did not say in what part of the house the child was found.

The boy was taken to a hospital for observation, but was "doing fine," Assistant Police Chief Kris Arneson said. She said the suspect is not the boy's mother.

"It's horrific, horrific," Arneson said of the assault on the child. "We never want children to be injured; that's part of the reason we call in our chaplains. It's a horrific scene for officers to encounter, and the victims in this case have injuries based on her actions."

The suspect, identified by police as Nataliia M. Karia, 42, fled the scene in a gold minivan, ran over a man standing near his vehicle at W. 28th Street and Grand Avenue S., then kept going and struck a bicyclist at E. 28th Street and Park Avenue S., nearly 2 miles east of the day care.

The pedestrian was dragged a significant distance, police said, and suffered broken bones and scrapes. The bicyclist suffered a broken leg. Both were taken to Hennepin County Medical Center.



Map: Suspect flees after day care hanging

A third person struck by the suspect's car, Nicole Thomas, 33, of Minneapolis, had left Wellstone High School and was driving on Park Avenue toward downtown when her car was hit. Thomas, who is almost six months pregnant, was taken to a hospital for monitoring and released after a few hours.

"It was scary," Thomas said Friday evening from her home. "I'm better now, but I was shaken up all day. It was definitely crazy to be part of and to witness. I feel really lucky, given the circumstances, and I hope everyone else involved is OK."

Thomas said after Karia hit her car, she kept driving. Thomas then saw the bicyclist inching himself away from the street. Passers-by gathered and called 911.

About 20 minutes later, Karia was seen on the Park Avenue overpass above Interstate 94, where she was threatening to jump onto the highway, Arneson said. Several passers-by held her down until police could take her into custody. She is being evaluated at a nearby hospital and is in police custody.

Police chaplains were sent to the day-care facility to talk to parents who arrived to pick up their children after the incident, as well as to HCMC and other sites to "talk to anyone who has been affected by this difficult case," police said in a news release.

Motive is a mystery

The day-care facility is registered to Karia, whose license, state records show, was issued in April 2009 and was set to expire next spring. The home is approved to care for up to 12 children.

Arneson said no motive has been established. "We don't know what was happening with her," she said.

The day care's Facebook page shows a photo of a smiling woman surrounded by young children of different ages. The page touts the provider as a licensed and college-educated mom.

"I am trained in first aid and CPR," it reads. "I have a luxury home with a large fenced yard just steps away from the Lake of the Isles that has been remodeled for the safety of your child."

Later Friday, the purple two-story frame house on a block dominated by brick apartment buildings was quiet and seemingly empty. A single unmarked police SUV was parked down the block. Sometime before 2 p.m., a small car slid into the garage in the back of the house, which is owned by Karia's husband, and several people went inside. An older man declined to give his name or answer a reporter's questions.

"We've got nothing to say," he said.

Staff writer Karen Zamora contributed to this report.

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Cops Arrest Man Accused of Terrorizing Calif. City With Air Horn

By Heather Navarro Published at 1:08 PM EST on Nov 15, 2016

nbcmiami.com



An air horn that sounds like a train has been terrorizing the residents of El Segundo for weeks, but police in the Southern California city have just arrested a man in connection with the noise — with air horn equipment inside his car, they say.

The bust came early Sunday at 4 a.m. — around the time many of the alarmingly loud incidents would occur.

"The sound is like a train coming through the neighborhood," said El Segundo Police Lt. Ray Garcia.

The noise has been plaguing residents on the west side of the city for weeks. Police have received numerous reports of an extremely loud air horn going off before residents spot a getaway car, a blue four-door sedan driven by a man.

Oftentimes, officers couldn't catch the air horn blower because the person would blare the horn and then "beat feet," police said. At times, officers on the east side of town could hear the noise and would hurry over, only to find that the perpetrator had taken off.

Sunday morning, officers once again heard the noise, then made a traffic stop at Grand Avenue and Main Street directly after. In a blue 2006 Chevrolet Aveo, they spotted air horn equipment inside the car, police said.

The commotion drew several residents from their homes, claiming they were victims of the air horn aggravator. They initiated a citizen's arrest, according to El Segundo police.

John W. Nuggent was then taken into custody by police, police said. He was booked at El Segundo jail on a misdemeanor charge of suspicion of disturbing the peace and his car, with horn inside, was impounded.

Garcia said the air horn aggravator has been sounding his horn almost every single night.

"He's been doing this for weeks, and we've been chasing him for weeks — but we got him," Garcia said.

Garcia said they aren't exactly sure why the man allegedly has an "ax to grind," but believe that he thinks someone in the area has wronged him in some way, and this is his way of getting back at them.

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Corona tycoon did NOT leave fortune to Spanish villagers 21/11

thelocal.es

THE LOCAL

The Local



Corona tycoon did NOT leave fortune to Spanish villagers

Fiona Govan · 25 Nov 2016, 11:51

Published: 25 Nov 2016 11:51

GMT+01:00

It's true that the sleepy Spanish village of Cerezales del Condado owes a huge debt of gratitude to Antonino Fernandez, the billionaire founder of the Corona brewery who died on August 31st at the age of 98.

The tiny hamlet in Castile-Leon had the good fortune of being the birthplace of

the man who went on to run the Mexican brewery responsible for Corona and he never forgot his roots.

But news this week that he had left every single resident of the village some €2 million each is sadly not true.

The story was published on the Daily Mail on Thursday and was quickly picked up by other media including The Daily Telegraph, Independent Online and Time magazine and was even mentioned on the BBC's Today programme.

But those in the village were bewildered at the international attention.

"It's simply not true, unfortunately," said Lucia Alaejos from the Fundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia, the cultural center founded in the village thanks to the patronage of the Corona founder.

"It seems someone got the wrong end of the stick and the story has just grown and grown. It's got completely out of hand."

She confirmed that Fernandez, who was one of 13 siblings and had no children of his own, had left part of his huge fortune to the descendants of his siblings.

"Many of them still visit for some months each summer, so it is great for the village and keeps it alive," she confirmed. "But the villagers won't be sharing in that inheritance directly."

The total inheritance left to those relatives in Spain is reported to be around €200 million.

"That inheritance is a private matter for the family."

But she did say that the village owes much to the son who moved to Mexico in 1949 and took a job at the brewery belonging to his wife's family.

"He never forgot his roots and would visit his homeland every summer," Alaejos said. "Thanks to his generosity, the town is much better off than many in the region."

"He paid for the restoration of the church, he brought running water to every home in the town and thanks to him, we have an amazing cultural center that brings visitors to the region."

Maximino Sanchez, the owner of the only bar in the village, told the local newspaper Diario de León: "I do not know what we would have done without Antonino. We used to have no money."

Born in 1917, in what the local paper Diario de Leon described as "poverty", Fernandez, the eleventh child of 13 left school at the age of 14. In 1949 he was offered a job in Mexico to work in the warehouse for his wife's uncle at Grupo Modelo.

He worked his way up through the ranks, and by 1971 he had risen to CEO.

He is credited with having made Corona not only Mexico's most popular beer but also a huge export phenomenon, including in his native Spain where it is sold under the Coronita brand.

He maintained his position as CEO until 1997 and as Chairman of the Board until 2005, with both roles later taken over by his nephew Carlos Fernández González.

In 2008, the village opened theFundación Cerezales Antonino y Cinia, a cultural centre build entirely on his donation.

Next spring, the foundation will open a new building designed by the architects Alejandro Zaera Polo and Maider Llaguno.

"While he was still alive he set up a fund for the continuing work of the foundation," explained Alaejos. "So we do have a lot to be grateful for."

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yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 22, 2016

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — A Rhode Island ballet company says its annual production of "The Nutcracker" will go on as scheduled despite the theft of the title character's mask and costume, the Sugar Plum Fairy's tutu and other costumes.

The Festival Ballet Providence's costumes were discovered missing from a Pawtucket warehouse last week.

Artistic Director Mihailo Djuric (muh-HY'-low JUHR'-itch) says while "a significant blow," the theft has made the dancers determined to make this year's performance extra special.

He has contacted ballet companies across the nation to see what is available to borrow, and several have stepped up.

The value of the stolen costumes hasn't been determined, but is estimated to be in the thousands of dollars. Police are investigating.

The company has been performing "The Nutcracker" for nearly 40 years. The show opens Dec. 16.

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Cow fart crackdown in California creates a stink as rebel farmers let rip

By Record Reporter 23:00, 29 NOV 2016 Updated 23:00, 29 NOV 2016 News

dailyrecord.co.uk

The authorities in the Golden State have ordered methane emissions cut by 40 per cent but hardpressed farmers say the target will hit their bottom line.



California farmers are kicking up a stink after the state ordered them to reduce the level of cow farts in order to tackle global warming.

The gases produced by cows are major sources of methane, a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere at a higher rate than carbon dioxide.

Despite fierce opposition from farmers, California Governor Jerry Brown signed a new law regulating the amount of methane released from cows.

California is America's largest milk-producing state and the state aims to reduce the gas from cow farts by 40 per cent by 2030.



California has been at the forefront of reducing CO2 emissions from cars in America and it has now turned its attention to the methane produced by cows as livestock are responsible for 14.5 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.

But farmers fear they will bear the costs of the new law as one of the ways of cutting methane is to change the feed the cattle are given to more expensive types.

State regulators also want farmers to purchase special digesters that capture methane from manure in large storage tanks and convert the gas into electricity.

Other farmers are looking to use special bags that sit on the back of their cows in order to collect their methane.

But Rob Vandenheuvel, general manager for the Milk Producers Council, warned that farmers will be forced to move elsewhere due to the extra costs involved in trapping the gas from cow farts.

He said: "The bottom line is it's going to negatively impact the economics of the California dairy industry.

"In the dairy business, the margins are so slim that something like this will force us out of state."

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Danish bishop's 300-year-old poo offers whiff of history

AFP 3

November 18, 2016



Researchers compared their findings with the diaries of Danish bishop Jens Bircherod, in which he detailed some of the "opulent" dinners that he had (AFP Photo/Miguel Alvarez)

Copenhagen (AFP) - A 300-year-old lump of faeces from a Danish bishop has shown researchers that he had a cosmopolitan diet that included grapes, figs and pepper, a Danish archaeologist said on Friday.

The faeces were originally found in a latrine box in 1937 when bishop Jens Bircherod's manor

was excavated in the northern city of Aalborg.

But they were only recently analysed as part of a research project on diaspora communities in Danish cities between the early 15th century and the late 17th century.

"Now we have a specific lump of faeces that we can match to a person we actually know, and through that we can study his diet," the archaeologist heading the project, Jette Linaa from the Moesgaard Museum outside the Danish city of Aarhus, told AFP.

While most other latrines from the late 17th century were used by many different people, this one was only used by Bircherod and his wife.

The presence of buckwheat, a local speciality on the Danish island of Funen where the bishop grew up, was further evidence that the sample came from him.

Researchers were also able to compare the findings with the Bishop's diaries, in which he detailed some of the "opulent" dinners that he had.

While most Danes at the time had to settle for regional staples like pork, rye bread and cabbage, the bishop -- along with other wealthy residents of Aalborg -- appears to have had a penchant for berries and nuts.

A peppercorn that was found would have had to travel all the way from India, while cloudberries eaten by Bircherod could have come from Norway.

"The exotic products were traded by some very specialised merchants in the city, and Aalborg was special because there was a class of very prosperous merchants who were all either migrants from Germany or from the Netherlands," Linaa said.

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Denmark had another year of record low crime

15/09 thelocal.dk

THE LOCAL ®





Denmark had another year of record low crime

Denmark had another year of record low crime

The Local · 28 Oct 2016, 14:04

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A new study from the Danish Justice Ministry shows that the "remarkably low" crime figures reported in 2014 continued throughout 2015.

The ministry's crime victim survey, released this week, revealed that just 14 percent of Danish adults were subjected to either violence, theft or vandalism in 2015. By comparison, that figure was at 25 percent in 1987.

The report showed that only 1.3 percent of Danes between the ages of 16 and 74 were the victims of violence last year. Only one out of ten people reported theft and just four percent were the victim of vandalism.

The trend follows a 2014 in which crime levels were so low that the Danish National Police said one would have to go "far back in time" to find similar figures.

"Overall, I'm pleased that criminality like violence and theft still remain relatively rare in Denmark. The 2015 figures show that we have a safe society in which criminality does not impact Danes' everyday life," Justice Minister Søren Pind said.

The survey didn't only contain positive news, however. The number of women who reported rapes or attempted rapes increased "slightly", Pind said. Just under two percent of women in the survey said that they had either been raped or faced an attempted rape over the past five years.

There were 480 rapes reported to police in 2015, an increase from the previous year but still in line with historical trends. The ministry said that "in the past 20-30 years, the number has been between 400 and 600 instances".

The number of actual rapes, however, may be much higher. The ministry said that only slightly more than every fourth rape or attempted rape is reported to police.

"The relatively low reporting percentage for forced intercourse can to some degree be because roughly four out of ten perpetrators are current or previous partners," a ministry statement read.

At the outset of 2016, it was revealed that as many as 700 rape reports per year were hidden in police statistics by giving them investigation numbers that did not classify them as rape cases. Although this practice was discontinued in November 2015, an unknown number of rape cases has failed to be recorded in official statistics.

Earlier this year, parliament passed a law that increased penalties for rapists and child abusers. Rape committed by force or the threat of force is now punishable by up to 3.5 years, a 12-month increase from the previous sentence. The punishment for raping someone who is unable to defend themselves or express their resistance was increased from eight months behind bars to 14, while the punishment for sexually abusing a child increased from 2.5 to 3.5 years.

With other aggravating circumstances, the penalties can be further increased.

The full Justice Ministry report can be found here (in Danish).

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Deslided: The most iconic landmark in every state

Slide #1: Whether you're an American exploring your own backyard or a tourist flocking to the country's most f... - Shutterstock



Whether you're an American exploring your own backyard or a tourist flocking to the country's most famous sites, these iconic landmarks will have anyone humming the Star Spangled Banner.

We've rounded up recognizable tourist attractions, natural landmarks, and iconic buildings that are all so much a part of their state's history that they practically define it.

From natural wonders like Yellowstone to manmade treasures like the Space Needle, the US isn't called "America the Beautiful" for nothing.

Here is the most iconic landmark in every US state.

Slide #2: ALABAMA: 16th Street Baptist Church



Much of the Civil Rights Movement unfolded in Alabama, so the state is home to many landmarks from that time period, including the 16th Street Baptist Church. The church was the first African-American church in Birmingham, and the site of many Civil Rights rallies and mass meetings, as well the site of a bombing in 1963 that killed four girls attending Sunday School, a tragedy that added fire to the movement.

Slide #3: ALASKA: Denali National Park



Denali National Park includes six million acres of Alaska's wilderness, and is home to many different kinds of wildlife, breathtaking landscapes, and Denali, the highest mountain peak in North America, with an elevation of 20,237 feet.

Slide #4: ARIZONA: The Grand Canyon



The Grand Canyon is a whopping 277 river miles long, 18 miles wide, and a mile deep. It's also the 15th oldest national park in America, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Slide #5: ARKANSAS: Little Rock Central High School



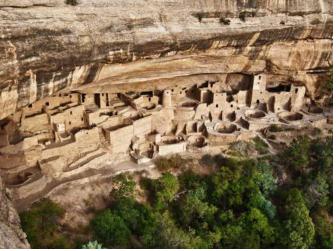
1957, nine African American students - known as the Little Rock Nine - were not allowed to attend Little Rock Central High School. President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the 101st Airborne Division to escort the students to school, making Little Rock the first public school to implement desegregation as brought on by the Brown v. Board of Education decision.

Slide #6: CALIFORNIA: The Golden Gate Bridge



The Golden Gate Bridge is considered one of the most impressive construction achievements of the 20th century. First opened in May of 1937, the suspension bridge spans the three-mile-long Golden Gate Strait that stretches between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Slide #7: COLORADO: Mesa Verde National Park



One of the best preserved archaeological sites in the US, Mesa Verde National Park offers a glimpse into how ancestral Puebloans lived in cave dwellings from 550 to 1300 AD. The park is home to over 4,700 archaeological sites and 600 cliff dwellings alone.

Slide #8: CONNECTICUT: Mystic Seaport



Mystic Seaport is the world's largest maritime museum. It boasts four national historic landmark vessels and has been in operation for over 85 years. There's even a 19th century coastal village and a working shipyard.

Slide #9: DELAWARE: Caesar Rodney statue



statue of Caesar Rodney stands in Wilmington, Delaware's Rodney Square. Rodney was an American lawyer, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and president of Delaware during the American Revolution. He is depicted riding a horse on the 1999 Delaware quarter.

Slide #10: FLORIDA: Disney World



Walt Disney built Disney World in Orlando to be the best theme park in the world. The park took two years and 9,000 people to build; it opened in 1971, and is now home to four parks within the general park, and two water parks.

Slide #11: GEORGIA: Georgia Aquarium

With 10 million gallons of marine and fresh water, the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta is the biggest aguarium in the western hemisphere.

Slide #12: HAWAII: USS Arizona Memorial

Meant to commemorate 1,102 of the 1,177 soldiers and marines killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor, the USS Arizona Memorial straddles the hull of the battleship that was sunk in the attack. The memorial is on Oahu island.

Slide #13: IDAHO: Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve







Located in Idaho's Snake River Plain, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is an otherworldly landscape that includes three lava fields, and has the deepest known open rift crack in the world at 800 feet.

Slide #14: ILLINOIS: Cloud Gate



Although it's best known by Chicagoans as the bean, the official name of the sculpture that sits in Chicago's Millennium Park is the Cloud Gate. The 110-ton sculpture was created by artist Anish Kapoor, and attracts tourists and locals alike.

Slide #15: INDIANA: Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Located in Speedway, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway hosts both the Indie 500 and the Brickyard 400. It first opened in 1909, and today has the highest capacity of any other sports venue in the world - it can seat close to 260,000 people.

Slide #16: IOWA: Field of Dreams

Built for the 1989 classic "Field of Dreams," the Field of Dreams baseball field in Dubuque County was split between two different farms, so that the producers could successfully film sunset shots. The family-owned farms have since been consolidated and sold, but people can still visit and even bat on the field.



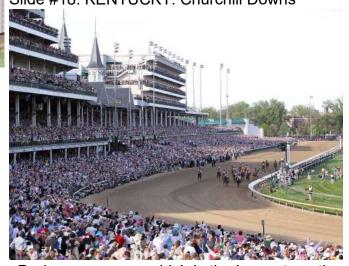


Slide #17: KANSAS: Dodge City



Established in 1856 as a stop along the Santa Fe Trail, Dodge City served as a safe haven for wagons traveling west, and also provided supplies to troops fighting Native Americans. Buffalo hunters and traders eventually took over the town - which still retains its wild west feel today - contributing to its lawlessness.

Slide #18: KENTUCKY: Churchill Downs



Churchill Downs in Louisville hosts the Kentucky Derby every year, which is the longest continually running sports event in America. The racetrack first opened in 1875, and ever since it's been a place to enjoy a mint julep and an exciting race.

Slide #19: LOUISIANA: The French Quarter

Dating back to 1718, New Orleans' French Quarter is the oldest neighborhood in the city, and its rich history is evident in its colorful shuttered buildings that feature balconies and plenty of flowers. The neighborhood also offers vibrant nightlife; it's the best place to celebrate Mardi Gras.

Slide #20: MAINE: Portland Head Light





Sitting along the shores of Fort Williams Park on Cape Elizabeth, the Portland Head Light was first lit in January of 1791. A keeper's quarter was also built next to the lighthouse; today the keeper's guarter houses a museum and the lighthouse is owned by Cape Elizabeth.

Slide #21: MARYLAND: Fort McHenry



Baltimore's star-shaped Fort McHenry served as the inspiration for Francis Scott Key to write the "Star Spangled Banner." The fort successfully protected Baltimore Harbor during the attack of the British Navy in 1814 in Chesapeake Bay.

Slide #22: MASSACHUSETTS: Boston Common



Situated in the heart of downtown Boston, Boston Common is a public park that dates back to 1634, making it the oldest city park in the US. The Common is close to 50 acres in size and serves as a connection point for a number of parks that wind through Boston's neighborhoods.

Slide #23: MICHIGAN: Henry Ford Museum

The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn is a 12-acre site that houses an incredible collection of Americana: antique machinery, automobiles, locomotives, and other pop culture artifacts.

Slide #24: MINNESOTA: Mall of America

The Mall of America in Bloomington is often referred to as a "city within a city." It's home to over 400





stores, and attracts between 35 to 40 million visitors per year.

Slide #25: MISSISSIPPI: Vicksburg National Military Park



The site of the American Civil War Battle of Vicksburg in 1863, Vicksburg National Military Park has plenty of monuments that help to recreate the battle, which was crucial in weakening the Confederacy's war effort.

Slide #26: MISSOURI: Gateway Arch



Stretching 630 feet into the air, the Gateway Arch is the tallest man-made monument in the US. The arch commemorates America's westward expansion. Take the tram to the top and experience unparalleled views of St. Louis and the Mississippi River.

Slide #27: MONTANA: Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument commemorates the 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn, a deadly clash between the US Army and Sioux and Cheyenne Indians who were trying to preserve their way of life.

Slide #28: NEBRASKA: Chimney Rock





Chimney Rock - or Elk Penis according to Native Americans - is a geological formation and designated National Historic site that served as a landmark along the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the Mormon Trail during the mid-19th century.

Slide #29: NEVADA: Las Vegas



Sure, the Hoover Dam is cool, but what's more iconically Nevada than Sin City? Check out the 4.2mile Las Vegas Strip, home to many of the largest hotels and casinos in the country. The Strip's most famous sites include the Luxor pyramid and sphinx, the Paris Hotel and Eiffel Tower, and the famous Bellagio fountains.

Slide #30: NEW HAMPSHIRE: Mount Washington Cog Railway



Mount Washington is the Northeast's highest peak, and famous for its volatile, erratic weather. Take the the Mount Washington Cog Railway to the observatory at the top: it's a coal-fired, steampowered locomotive that was built in 1869, and the second steepest railway track in the world.

Slide #31: NEW JERSEY: Atlantic City Boardwalk

Popularized by Monopoly, the gambling town of Atlantic City was built as a quaint seaside resort, and boasts the country's first boardwalk. The four-mile promenade was built in 1870 to keep sand



out of hotel lobbies, and still features some of the city's best attractions, like the Entrance to the Stars, which has celebrity hand prints from the likes of Frank Sinatra.

Slide #32: NEW MEXICO: Carlsbad Caverns



The

The

Carlsbad Caverns, with over 100 caves, is one of the world's largest collections of caves. Its Big Room is its largest natural limestone chamber, and, at almost 4,000 feet in length, it's the 28th largest in the world.

Slide #33: NEW YORK: Empire State Building



The iconic Empire State building features equally iconic views of New York City.

Slide #34: NORTH CAROLINA: The Biltmore



Biltmore is one of America's most famous estates, and one of the best remaining examples of the Gilded Age. A veritable American castle, often likened to America's Versailles, it was built by George Washington Vanderbilt between 1889 and 1895, and is the US' largest privately owned house, with 250 rooms (43 alone are bathrooms).

Slide #35: NORTH DAKOTA: The Painted Canyon



Theodore Roosevelt, then not yet president, came to these badlands to hunt bison, and it's said that they inspired him to launch the conservation movement. The Painted Canyon especially, inside Theodore Roosevelt National Park, is a stunning array of colorful desert and petrified wood and rock formations.

Slide #36: OHIO: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Museum



From handwritten Jimi Hendrix lyrics to John Lennon's Sgt Pepper suit, and a pair of Ray Charles' sunglasses, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Museum pays tribute to rock and roll's most legendary artists and producers in the form of 150,000 square feet of memorabilia.

Slide #37: OKLAHOMA: Route 66



No road is more iconic, more quintessentially American than Route 66, also known as "Mother Road." Though it migrates West from Chicago through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona before reaching California, Oklahoma has a longer stretch of the historic highway than any other state, with around 400 miles

Slide #38: OREGON: Crater Lake

Aptly named, Crater Lake was formed when the caldera of the Mount Mazama volcano collapsed. At

1,943 feet in depth it is the deepest lake in America. Since it doesn't feed any rivers, fish were added later, and the water replaces itself thanks to rainfall and snow.

Slide #39: PENNSYLVANIA: Liberty Bell

Nothing says America like freedom, and nothing says freedom like Philadelphia's Liberty Bell, said to have been rung during the public reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Slide #40: RHODE ISLAND: Newport Mansions





Back in the Gilded Age America's wealthiest families summered in Rhode Island, building themselves chateaux like the ones they saw in Europe, which are now known collectively as the Newport Mansions, and include the Vanderbilts' 70room Breakers, the Marble House, and Rosecliff.

Slide #41: SOUTH CAROLINA: Fort Sumter



shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter in the Charleston Harbor, essentially making it the birthplace of the Civil War.

Slide #42: SOUTH DAKOTA: Mount Rushmore

Mount Rushmore is an American cultural icon, featuring the 60-foot faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln carved into granite.

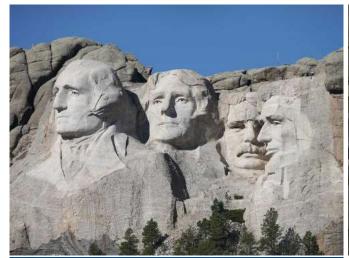
Slide #43: TENNESSEE: Graceland

Arguably one of America's most famous musicians, and not called "The King" for nothing, pay your respects at Graceland, Elvis Presley's estate-turned-museum in Memphis.

Slide #44: TEXAS: The Alamo

Remember the Alamo? The San Antonio site plays a central part in American history as the place of a pivotal battle in the Texas Revolution in 1836, which launched folk heroes like Davy Crockett to

The first





fame.



Slide #45: UTAH: Salt Lake Temple



Built by

Brigham Young, founder of Salt Lake City and second president of the Mormon church, the Salt Lake Temple is the world's largest Mormon temple.

Slide #46: VERMONT: Ben and Jerry's



Despite being one of the country's smallest states, it's home to an ice cream giant. Take a 30-minute tour of the Ben and Jerry's factory, and grab some samples.

Slide #47: VIRGINIA: Arlington National Cemetery

Virginia is a hotbed of history (there's Colonial Williamsburg, George Washington's Mount Vernon, and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello), but the Arlington National Cemetery attracts around three million visitors a year. There are over 14,00 graves here spread out over 600 acres (including John F.

Kennedy's), and the cemetery conducts almost 30 funeral services every weekday.

Slide #48: WASHINGTON: Space Needle





Take in Seattle's skyline from the Space Needle's 520-foot high observation deck, or its revolving restaurant. The 605-foot tall tower was built for the 1962 World's Fair.

Slide #49: WASHINGTON, DC: The White House



Snap a selfie in front of the White House, arguably one of the most recognizable buildings on the planet.

Slide #50: WEST VIRGINIA: New River Gorge Bridge



Completed in 1977, the 3,030-foot New River Gorge Bridge was the world's longest single-span steel arch bridge for years (it is now 4th longest). It's also one of the most photographed places in West Virginia, and represents the state on the 2006 commemorative quarter. It also hosts Bridge Day, when it's open to pedestrians, abseilers, BASE jumpers and bungee jumpers for a day.

Slide #51: WISCONSIN: Taliesin

Visit Taliesin, the home of Frank Lloyd Wright, one of the most famous American architects, and pioneer of what he called "organic architecture," in which buildings were designed to harmonize with their environment.

Slide #52: WYOMING: Yellowstone National Park





Yellowstone National Park, America's first national park, attracts over three million visitors annually with its 3,500 square miles of wilderness, geothermal phenomena, and wildlife. Most of the park sits on top of a slumbering volcano, and it boasts more geysers and hot springs - including the famous Old Faithful - than any other place on earth. Don't miss checking out the incredible Morning Glory Pool.

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Devastating photographs of a famished baby shame the world and communities.

A man carries the body of six-month-old Jane Alam (Picture: Barcroft)

WARNING: Extremely graphic and upsetting images below.

The refugees arrive with horrific stories of rape, murder and persecution at the hands of their home country's military.

Often with just the clothes they are wearing, whole families are pouring over the border into Bangladesh, saying the authorities in Myanmar are forcing them from their homes

Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) is predominantly Buddhist, but up to a million Rohingyaspeaking Muslims live in the western areas, viewed by many as illegal immigrants despite living there for generations.

A UN official said that what is currently happening in the country amounts to 'ethnic cleansing' – i.e the attempt to wipe out a minority group with mass executions or deportations.

Refugees described soldiers firing at villagers from helicopter gunships, torching hundreds of homes, carrying out arbitrary arrests, and raping women and girls – claims the country's military denies.

We have chosen to publish these harrowing images, taken today, to raise awareness of the crisis.



Refugee Noor Begum seen crying near the dead body of her six-month-old son Jane Alam

These photographs were taken today in Chittagong, Bangladesh, showing a family who just arrived in the country after fleeing Myanmar.

Shown above, refugee Noor Begum is pictured finally arriving at a camp in Teknaf, in the southern Cox's Bazar district.

Her baby son Jane Alam, aged just six

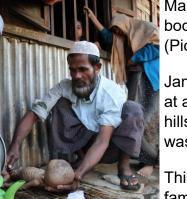
months, was suffering from starvation and pneumonia during the journey.

Sadly, he passed away just minutes after the family arrived at relative safety.

The family say they had to hide in the hills for 20 days with barely any food, to avoid the brutality of Myanmar's army.



Jane Alam, aged six months, died minutes after their arrival (Picture: Barcroft)



Man washed Jane's body before his burial (Picture: Barcroft)

Jane was laid to rest at a graveyard on a hillside, after men washed his tiny body.

This is just one family's tragedy.
Thousands more are trying to reach safety,

many being forcibly turned back when they reach the Bangladesh border, Amnesty International said

Champa Patel, the organisation's South Asia Director, said: 'Fleeing collective punishment in Myanmar, they are being pushed back by the Bangladeshi authorities.

'Trapped between these cruel fates, their desperate need for food, water and medical care is not being addressed.'

One woman, 40, said she had fled after the Myanmar army killed her husband and one of her sons.



People pray before burying Jane Alam (Picture: Barcroft)

Noor Begum seen crying near the dead body of her six-month-old son (Picture: Barcroft)

'We are sleeping outside in the mud,' she said. 'My son is two years old and is crying all the time, he is very cold in the mornings. Still, compared to Myanmar, Bangladesh seems like heaven to me.'

Repression of the Rohingya has been criticised for years, however the latest wave of

violence is in response to an attack on Myanmar army border posts on October 9.

The retribution from the army goes well beyond anything proportionate and punishes the whole community, not just those responsible, Amnesty said,

At least 30,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, according to UN estimates.

It is hard to verify exact reports as journalists are not granted access to the areas affected.



Myanmar for generations.

Who are the Rohingya?

The Rohingya are a stateless Muslim ethnic group described by the United Nations as one of the world's most persecuted minorities.

Using a dialect similar to that spoken in Chittagong in southeast Bangladesh, the Sunni Muslims are loathed by many in majority Buddhist Myanmar who see them as illegal immigrants and call them 'Bengali' – even though many have lived in

Most live in impoverished western Rakhine state, but are denied citizenship and smothered by restrictions on movement and work.

The UN refugee agency says well over 120,000 have fled Rakhine since religious violence in 2012 — an exodus that continues, despite the perils of the sea journey.

Last year, thousands were stranded at sea after a well-worn trafficking route through Thailand collapsed after the discovery of scores of shallow graves on the Malaysia border.

There are around 300,000 Rohingya living in Bangladesh's southern coastal district bordering Myanmar, the vast majority of whom have fled Myanmar in recent decades.

Bangladesh recognises only a small portion as refugees and regularly turns back those trying to cross the border.

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By Sarah Barns, The Sun

November 17, 2016 3:13pm Updated November 18, 2016 | 8:40am



A shocking video claims France's first female astronaut screamed "Earth must be warned!" before she attempted suicide.

Claudie Haigneré, 59, reportedly had to "be restrained" after yelling the eerie caution prior to falling into a coma from an overdose of sleeping pills.

A six-minute YouTube conspiracy film by UFOmania has resurfaced this week examining her story. It has been viewed nearly a million times.

In 1993, esteemed scientist Claudie was a backup crew member for the 1993 Mir Altaïr mission, which included her future husband, Jean-Pierre Haigneré.

She made it to the Mir space station in 1996 as part of the Russian-French Cassiopée mission, and in 2001 became the first European woman to visit the International Space Station.

The asteroid 135268 Haigneré is named after Claudie and her husband.

After retiring from space work, Claudie entered French politics and worked as minister delegate for research and new technologies from 2002 to 2004 and minister delegate for European affairs from 2004 to 2005.

But, despite her efforts, budgets for scientific research were cut.

After leaving politics, she worked in a biology lab at the Pasteur Institute.



Modal Trigger

That's where the story gets strange.

Modal Trigger

In December 2008, it was widely reported that Claudie had to be rushed to a hospital after allegedly taking an overdose of sleeping pills.

It was reported that she was found conscious but had to be restrained while screaming, "Earth must be warned!" before lapsing into a coma.

Claudie blamed the incident on "burnout syndrome" and is now the director of the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie — the largest science museum in Europe.

However, alien enthusiasts believe she was trying to warn the Earth about life in outer space.

The YouTube video, which is narrated by a robot voice, is a conspiracy that blends fact and fiction.



Claudie did attempt suicide in 2008, but the rest appears to be made up and continuously reappears on conspiracy forums, such as David Icke's website.

The video says: "She had to be forcefully restrained after screaming 'Earth must be warned!'

"More ominously, her laboratory where she worked at the forefront of human/alien DNA research was destroyed by fire."

The video uses quotes from real reports by news agency AFP, but they're taken out of context, with additional information.

There is no such thing as "human/alien DNA research" because we have never encountered any aliens.

Claudie's story often pops up when something happens to a prominent UFO expert.

The mysterious death of conspiracy theorist Max Spiers in October may have triggered the latest interest.

Spiers was found dead on a sofa at a friend's house in Poland days after warning his mother to "investigate" if anything happened to him. Friends also claim he had vomited a black liquid before his death.

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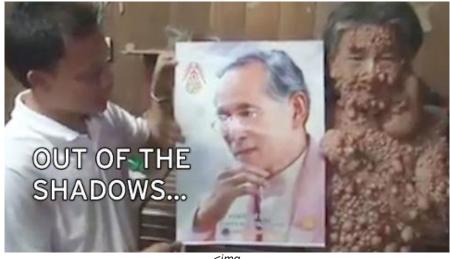
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Disfigured hermit with 'bubble-like tumours' comes out of hiding after 45 years

By Patrick Lion 11:59, 18 NOV 2016 Updated 12:00, 18 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

WARNING - GRAPHIC CONTENT: Neurofibromatosis sufferer Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa wants to honour Thailand's late king Bhumibol Adulyadej



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src="http://brightcove01.brightcove.com/24/4221396001/201611/765/4221396001 pubId=4221396001" class="video-thumbnail"/>

A man whose disfigurement made him a recluse for 45 years has emerged publicly to show the world his 'bubble-like tumour' skin condition.

Neurofibromatosis sufferer Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa has been shunned by all around him since he was diagnosed aged 15 - including most of his own family.

The disease has caused huge bubble-like tumours to form all over his face and body.

But he has been tempted out of hiding to pay respects to his country's late king, Thai monarch Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Originally a native of the Thai capital of Bangkok, Mr Charoenrattanaprapa, 60, said he was never accepted by the local community and was driven away from the metropolis.



Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa

This forced him to cross the country's southwestern border into Myanmar, then still called Burma.

He lived there until being arrested as an illegal immigrant and deported back to Thailand last vear.

Having never held a job in his life because of what the crippling disease has done to his appearance, and with no family members to fall back on, Mr Charoenrattanaprapa was found living alone in a hut by members of the Red Cross in South Thailand Yala Province

He has been receiving food and other daily provisions from hospital volunteers, who visit him in his hut.

But Mr Charoenrattanaprapa now wants to return to his native city to pay his respects to King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died last month aged 88.



Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa

After his trip to Bangkok, where the late leader is buried, Mr Charoenrattanaprapa will most likely return to Yala Province and continue to receive help from the Red Cross.

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, the late king's only son, is due to be proclaimed monarch on 1st December.

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Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa



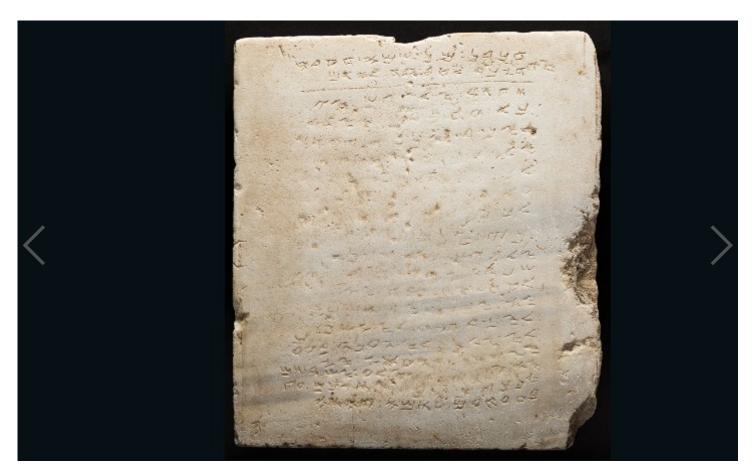
Shiti Charoenrattanaprapa holding portrait of late monarch of Thailand King Bhumibol the Great

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Earliest known stone version of Ten Commandments sold for \$850,000

By Georgia McCafferty, CNN

Updated 10:45 AM ET, Thu November 17, 2016



Photos: Discovered: Incredible treasures found in unexpected places

The earliest known stone copy of the Ten Commandments is up for auction in Beverly Hills on Novem 2016. Bidding will start at \$250,000.

1 of 16 Hide C€

(CNN) — The earliest known stone inscription of the Ten Commandments sold for \$850,000 -- and a stipulation the owner must put the tablet on public display.

Described as a "national treasure" of Israel, the stone was first uncovered in 1913 during excavations for a railroad station near Yavneh in Israel and is the only intact tablet version of the Commandments thought to exist.



Bidding for this ancient tablet of the 10 Commandments will start at \$250,000.

"The tablet's significance is testament to the deep roots and enduring power of the Commandments that still form the basis of three of the world's great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam," said David Michaels, director of ancient coins for Heritage Auctions.

"Its surface is worn, battered and encrusted in places, but running a gloved finger over it does produce, in some people, a particular thrill of touching a piece of Bible history."

Buried for centuries

The two-foot-square (0.18 square meter), 115-pound (52 kg) marble slab is inscribed in an early Hebrew script called Samaritan and most likely adorned a Samaritan synagogue or home in the ancient town of Jabneel, Palestine, which is now Yavneh in modern Israel, according to Michaels.

It lists nine of the 10 commonly known Biblical Commandments from the Book of Exodus, with an additional Commandment to worship on the sacred mountain of Mount Gerizim, near Nablus, which is a now a city in the West Bank.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in Vain" was deliberately left off the list to keep the total number of Commandments to 10, according to scholars.



It is the earliest known intact stone copy of the Biblical text.

Michaels said the the tablet's home was either destroyed by the Romans between 400 and 600 AD, or by the Crusaders in the 11th century, and that the stone had lain buried in the rubble of the ruins for centuries before its discovery near Yavneh.

"The workmen who found it did not recognize its importance and either sold or gave it to a local Arab man, who set the stone into the threshold of a room leading to his inner courtyard, with the inscription facing up," Michaels said.

"Some of the letters of the central part of the inscription are blurred -- but still readable under proper lighting -- either from the conditions of its burial or foot traffic while it was resting in the courtyard."

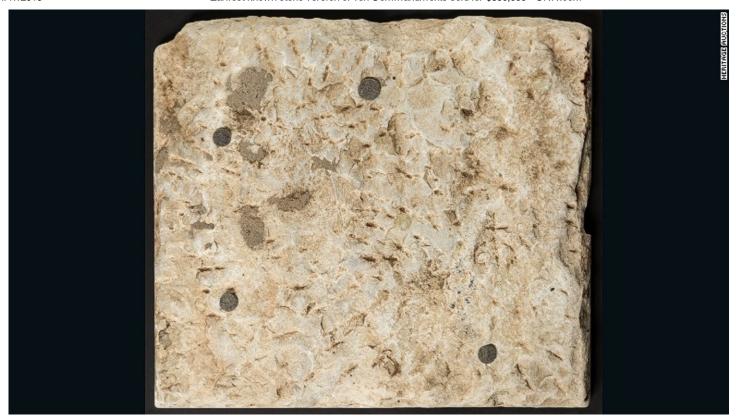


Related Article: This Chinese sculpture has a precious secret

Thirty years later, in 1943, the man's son sold the stone to Y. Kaplan, a municipal archaeologist.

"He immediately recognized its importance as an extremely rare 'Samaritan Decalogue,' one of five such known stone inscriptions that date to the late Roman-Byzantine era (300-640 CE) or just after the Muslim invasion of the seventh century CE," added Michaels.

CE is a term used in academic texts and refers to "Common Era", which is more commonly known as AD.



The back of the tablet also displays centuries of wear and tear.

National treasure

After recognizing its importance, Kaplan asked a noted archaeologist -- Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, who would go on to become Israel's second-longest serving president -- to help him investigate its provenance. They published an academic paper that recounts the story of the stone's discovery and provides background information about its historical context.

Kaplan eventually sold the stone to an American, Rabbi Saul Deutsch, who took it to the US and put it on display at his Living Torah Museum in Brooklyn, New York.

Described as a "National Treasure" by Israel, its export was approved under a special permit issued in 2005 by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA).



Related Article: Rare, 2,000-year-old Roman coin discovered in Jerusalem

"It is significant in that it is the only such piece that has secure provenance, a 70-year history of study and scholarship by renowned specialists such as Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and can now be legally obtained and kept outside of Israel, provided it is placed on public display as per the IAA's requirements," Michaels said.

The IAA stipulated that the stone can be sold to a third party, but only on condition that it be placed on public display "where all can view it and enjoy."

Rabbi Deutsch put the stone up for sale, along with more than 50 other "Bible-related historical artifacts" he owns, to fund an expansion of his Living Torah Museum, according to Michaels.

Employees laid off at unemployment centers across the state

wjactv.com



By Lauren Petrelli Friday, November 18th 2016 Workers at unemployment centers across the state found out they were laid off on Friday morning after the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry announced that 600 staff members lost their

jobs.

HARRISBURG - Workers at unemployment centers across the state found out they were laid off on Friday morning.

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry announced that 600 staff members lost their jobs.

The department said in a statement that the layoffs were a result of the Senate's failure to vote on House Bill 2375, which would have allowed for \$57.5 million in funding to administer unemployment benefits to out-of-work Pennsylvanians.

"This was not a last-minute ask, but rather what should have been a logical conclusion to conversations that began in April about extending a statute that was already in place and that has allowed the department to administer unemployment benefits in a timely manner," said Labor & Industry Secretary Kathy Manderino.

Early in 2016, the department asked for \$57.5 million in funding to keep up planned system improvements amidst decreased federal funding for UC administration.

"Without the \$57.5 million in funding, there is simply not enough money to pay staff," Manderino said. "The department has made great strides in efficiency and now, due to the Senate's lack of action, those strides - and service to our state's unemployed - have been jeopardized."

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mmtimes.com

Myanmar Times

Exorcist says he was 'possessed' when he murdered children

By AFP | Monday, 21 November 2016

A self-proclaimed sorcerer who allegedly beat three children to death in an exorcism ritual appeared in court on November 18 when he told reporters he was possessed by a "dark spirit" at the time of the killings.

Police say the black magic practitioner, Ko Tun Naing, 30, punched and kicked two toddlers and an eight-month-old baby to death last month in a village on the outskirts of the commercial capital.

According to witnesses, Ko Tun Naing told villagers the children were possessed by evil spirits and then killed them over two days as their families watched the ritual.

Speaking as police led him away from the court hearing, Ko Tun Naing told reporters he had been possessed when he attacked the children.

"I did it because I lost control of my mind at that time as the dark spirit took over me," he said.

The uncle of the dead three-year-old, also named Ko Tun Naing, said the villagers lost their senses after the sorcerer fed them "blessed" water and made them stand in a circle as he recited incantations.

"Because of what he did everyone was out of their mind," he told AFP reporters who visited him in Twante, south of Yangon, several days after the killings.

A police report on the incident said the bodies of the children – a three-year-old boy, a two-year-old girl and a baby girl – showed evidence of being punched, kicked and stamped on.

Hospital workers alerted authorities after the father of another little girl who had been beaten brought her to hospital. According to police, the exorcist struck the four-year-old girl an axe.

Ko Tun Naing has been charged under sections 302, 325, and 201 of the penal code, for causing grievous hurt, disposing of evidence, and murder. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

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Expert who investigated death of KGB spy 'killed himself'

08:18 EST, 24 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



Radiation expert, 46, who investigated the 'assassination' of KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko 'killed himself by stabbing his arms and chest repeatedly five months after a trip to Russia'

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

 Matthew Puncher found dead at Oxfordshire home with stab wounds

- Radiation expert had investigated 'assassination' of Alexander Litvinenko
- Pathologist said the 46-year-old's injuries had been self-inflicted
- But the evidence could not rule out that someone else had been involved
- Inquest heard Dr Puncher 'feared prison' over 'coding error' in research

By Joseph Curtis For Mailonline

Dr Matthew Puncher, pictured, killed himself with self-inflicted stab wounds, an inquest has ruled, although the possibility of someone else being involved in his death was 'not excluded'

A radiation expert who investigated the 'assassination' of Alexander Litvinenko was found dead five months after a trip to Russia, an inquest heard.

Matthew Puncher, 46, bled to death at his home from multiple stab wounds inflicted by two knives.

A pathologist said he could not 'exclude' the possibility that someone else was involved in the death - but concluded the injuries were self-inflicted.

It led a coroner to record that Dr Puncher - who discovered the amount of toxic polonium inside ex-KGB agent Litvinenko after he drank poisoned tea in London in 2006 - committed suicide.

The inquest also heard the scientist had 'become obsessed' with a coding error he made in his research which he feared could 'land him in prison' for breaking a contract with the US Government, while his wife said his mood had 'completely changed' following a trip to Russia.

Dr Puncher was found dead at his home in Drayton, Oxfordshire, in May with stab wounds to his arms, neck and upper abdomen.

He was an expert in radiation protection dosimetry and worked for Public Health England at the UK's Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, Oxfordshire.

He had been given sole responsibility over a contract with the US Federal Government for a programme measuring polonium levels inside people who previously worked on the USSR's nuclear weapons.

Head of department at Harwell, George Etherington, described Dr Puncher's concerns that his 'miscalculation' of the effects of the radiation on the workers would land him prison as 'irrational'.

The inquest also heard that redundancies and restructuring at Public Health England's premises in Harwell, near Didcot, had resulted in Mr Puncher receiving a much greater workload.

Colleague George Etherington said in a statement that Dr Puncher was a senior scientist working in the area of radiation exposure.

He said: 'About three to five years ago we began to carry out contractual work for the American Federal Government working on risks of exposure to plutonium.

'About two to three years ago Matt was asked to take the lead and in April 2015 the restructuring was completed,' he said.

Dr Matthew Puncher, who investigated the 'assassination' of ex-KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko, pictured, committed suicide, an inquest ruled

'In February 2016 he attended a meeting in Russia and when he returned he appeared to be quiet and more confined and people told me mistakes made in mathematical analysis came to light during this meeting.

'On April 27 I could see Matt was stressed and he said he had made a mistake and he thought he could be prosecuted for not meeting the contractual commitment.

'He said it was having an effect on his marriage but said his wife was very supportive but he had been having thoughts of suicide. I told him his fears were groundless and he would look back and wonder why he worried so much.'

The inquest heard Dr Puncher had told other workers about the error in his paper which was rectified in an addendum but that was something he believed was a way of 'fudging it.'

He also told colleagues he thought he was having a nervous breakdown and his brain was not working. It was also revealed during the inquest that his work had been evaluated as excellent and he was in line for a bonus.

However the bonus was blocked by the Human Resources department due to only a certain amount of employees being entitled to the bonus payments. He also raised concerns about the travel conditions for his journey to Russia.

Detective Constable Rachel Clarke, who investigated the death, said: 'His injuries were so extensive, I didn't know how he could have inflicted them on himself without becoming unconscious so we looked at the wider circumstances.'

DC Clarke said there was no evidence of a disturbance or a struggle and no evidence of anyone else's blood.

Dr Puncher worked at the UK's Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, Oxfordshire, ringed, but the inquest heard he feared a 'coding error' he made could land him 'in prison'

She added: 'It was very unusual. All the information told us he was very depressed and no-one in his family seemed particularly surprised he had taken his own life.'

His post mortem was carried out by Home Office pathologist Dr Nicholas Hunt, who said it was possible for a person to self-inflict the number of wounds he did before becoming unconscious

Dr Hunt also conducted the post mortem on weapons expert Dr David Kelly in 2003, who was found dead in Oxfordshire woodland around 10 miles from where Dr Puncher lived.

The Hutton Inquiry concluded that Dr Kelly had committed suicide.

Dr Puncher's wife Kathryn, who was married to him for 16 years, told Oxford Coroner's Court his mood 'completely changed' after the visit to Russia before Christmas.

She said: 'He was always an upbeat and sensitive man.

'He was brilliant with the children as he was so intelligent and enjoyed helping them with their homework.

BATTLE FOR JUSTICE: THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

A public inquiry concluded earlier this year that the killing of Mr Litvinenko - an outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin - who died in 2006 after drinking tea laced with radioactive polonium-210 - had 'probably' been carried out with the approval of the Russian president.

The inquiry headed by the former high court judge Sir Robert Owen found two Russian men - Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun - had deliberately poisoned Mr Litvinenko by putting polonium-210 into his drink at a London hotel, leading to an agonising death.

It said the use of the radioactive substance - which could only have come from a nuclear reactor - was a 'strong indicator' of state involvement and that the two men had probably been acting under the direction of the FSB.

A UK public inquiry found Andrei Lugovoi, pictured, was one of two men who 'deliberately poisoned' Mr Litvinenko by putting polonium in his drink at a London hotel

Possible motives included Mr Litvinenko's work for British intelligence agencies, his criticism of the FSB, and his association with other Russian dissidents, while it said there was also a 'personal dimension' to the antagonism between him and Mr Putin.

International arrest warrants issued for Mr Lugovoi and Mr Kovtun remain in force although Russia continues to refuse their extradition.

In a statement to mark the 10th anniversary of his death, Marina Litvinenko said her husband - who she called Sasha - had been an 'extraordinary man' whose courage in speaking out against the Russian security service, the FSB, had left an enduring legacy.

While she acknowledged Mr Putin had refused to accept the inquiry's findings, she said it remained open for other world leaders to take action against the Russian state and that she hoped her struggle to find the truth had not been in vain.

Dmitry Kovtun, pictured, was also found responsible for the death by the inquiry

'It has taken 10 long years for the truth to be established and for Sasha's dying words that President Putin was responsible for his death to be proved to be true,' she said.

'I know that Mr Putin's Russia does not accept the findings of the British public inquiry and will continue to deny the truth in the face of overwhelming evidence.

'But those findings are now part of history and the rest of the world understands the difference between truth and propaganda. And that is what matters to me.

'What action world leaders will take against the ever vengeful Russian state in these dramatic times remains to be seen. I hope and pray that my struggle has not been in vain.'

'After Christmas he changed completely. He just lost interest and I had to prompt him to do things like getting dressed and washing up, things he did without thinking before.

'He used to cook all the meals but he just stopped. He seemed to stop caring about anything.'

Dr Puncher and a colleague calculated the amount of polonimum-210 found inside Alexander Litvinenko's body following his death in 2006.

Litvinenko was a former officer of the Russian FSB secret service who specialised in tackling organised crime.

He fled with his family to London and was granted asylum in 2000 and worked as a journalist, writer and consultant for the British intelligence services.

In January 2016 a UK public inquiry concluded the defector was probably murdered on the direct orders of the Russian security service FSB, approved by President Putin.

Oxfordshire Coroner Nicholas Graham recorded a verdict of suicide.

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Fallen comrades: Caroline of Brunswick's life and death in Hammersmith

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Fallen comrades: Caroline of Brunswick's life and death in Hammersmith

Hammersmith, with its riverside factories and wharves, was badly bombed during the Second World War – but that's a story for another blog post. Amongst the postwar concrete of the immediate area around Hammersmith tube station, a few older buildings and facades remain: a Georgian building that now houses a Chinese restaurant, rows of 19th Century villas leading down towards the river, and the splendid Gothic church of St Paul, built from a distinctive pinkish

stone.



St Paul's Church, Hammersmith

Today St Paul's also has a modern extension, and is surrounded by a pleasant green space full of blossom trees, a magnet for workers from nearby shops and offices during their lunch breaks. As with so many green spaces in built up areas of London, this piece of land was once a burial ground – indeed, archaeologists uncovered many burials during the construction of the church's extension in 2009-10. Only a small number of gravestones remain, clustered by the church's tower, tucked away in a corner of the churchyard.



The grave of Richard Honey and George Francis

One of these gravestones – pictured above – is protected by English Heritage, not because the men whose grave it marked were rich or illustrious but because of how they died, and how their friends and colleagues chose to commemorate their deaths. Richard Honey and George Francis were ordinary working men who met an untimely end when trouble flared at the funeral of George IV's estranged wife, Caroline of Brunswick, on 14th August 1821.

Caroline Amelia Elisabeth of Brunswick was a German princess, a first cousin of George IV (her mother had been the sister of George III). She became engaged to the future George IV in 1794. George was already secretly married to Maria Fitzherbert, though this match was not legal as George had not sought the permission of his

father the King to marry, as set out in the Royal Marriages Act of 1772. This Act had come into existence to prevent members of the Royal Family from marrying anyone deemed unsuitable after George III's brother married a commoner, Anne Horton, in 1771.

George III refused to give financial help to his debt-ridden, wayward heir unless he got married. Caroline of Brunswick was considered a suitable match and she and George were engaged despite having never met. Concerns about Caroline's suitability were first raised when the diplomat Lord

Malmesbury went over to Brunswick to bring Caroline over to England for the wedding. Malmesbury expressed reservations about Caroline's lack of tact and poor personal hygiene. Nevertheless, Caroline made the journey over to England, arriving in Greenwich on 5th April 1795.



Commons)

The marriage between Caroline and George was a disaster from the start. Both parties were immediately repelled by the other. George, upon seeing Caroline for the first time, simply called for a glass of brandy. He was extremely drunk during the wedding ceremony. It was rumoured that Caroline had been suggested as a possible bride by George's mistress at the time, Lady Jersey, in the hope an unappealing wife would ensure that George continued his relationship with his mistress.

Caroline gave birth to a girl, Princess Charlotte Augusta, on 7th January 1796, nine months after the wedding. By this time, rumours were already circulating about the poor state of the royal marriage and in April 1796 the couple formally separated. Princess Charlotte did not live with her mother, but Caroline visited her often. Caroline also brought a number of other children into her household. One of these children, a little boy called William Austin, was alleged to be Caroline's illegitimate son. This claim led

to Caroline being subjected to investigations over her fidelity, during which time she was unable to see her daughter. The accusations of infidelity were not able to be proved, but Caroline became increasingly isolated socially and left England for mainland Europe in 1814.



George IV when he was Prince of Wales. When Caroline first met him, she remarked that he was a great deal fatter than she'd been led to believe. (image from Wikimedia Commons)

Caroline settled in Italy, where a man called Bartolomeo Pergami was hired as her servant. Pergami rose to become the head of Caroline's household, and before long scurrilous rumours about Caroline's relationship with him began to spread back in England. In 1817, Princess Charlotte tragically died in childbirth at the age of 21. George declined to inform Caroline of their daughter's death, and Caroline only heard the news by chance from a passing courier.

By this time, George was keen to divorce Caroline, something which could only be done if one of the parties admitted or was found guilty of adultery. After the death of George III in 1820, Caroline returned to England to assert her rights as Queen, and it was then that George intensified his efforts to legally end their marriage.

What followed was an infamous, highly publicised trial that sought to prove Caroline guilty of adultery with Pergami. However, what George and his government had not considered was Caroline's popularity with the general public. George was deeply unpopular – he was seen as an

incompetent drunk – whereas Caroline was viewed as the wronged wife. Many petitions, altogether collecting around a million signatures, were collected supporting Caroline's cause. The Bill of Pains and Penalities, which sought to remove all of Caroline's priveliges and titles as George's wife, was defeated in the House of Lords.

During the trial, Caroline had brought her household to Hammersmith, to Brandenburgh House, a grand residence that had recently been vacated by the Margravine of Anspach. Caroline quickly became popular with local residents, and it is said that when the Bill of Pains and Penalties was defeated, "the Hammersmith tradesmen who served her illuminated their houses, and the populace



Caroline at her trial (image via Wikimedia Commons)

shouted and made bonfires in front of Brandenburgh House. After her acquittal, the poor queen publicly returned thanks for that issue in Hammersmith Church, and more deputations came to Brandenburgh House to congratulate her on her triumph." (source)

Media coverage of the trial was huge, and hugely sensational. The Radical politican William Cobbett took up Caroline's cause. A biography of Cobbett states that "from the moment of Caroline's arrival in England, [Cobbett] constituted himself her champion." (G.D.H. Cole – *The Life of William Cobbett*, p.166) Cobbett and his Radical colleagues were able to utilise the popular press in support of Caroline's cause, with papers and news sheets being printed in large numbers and distributed far and wide.

The story, according to Cobbett, reached "every cottage in the Kingdom". It arrived there via a news-chain. At the top of the chain were the newspapers, which sold only a few thousand because the stamp duty kept their price at 7d (though the *Times* doubled its sales to 20,000 during the queen's trial by supporting her with more enthusiasm than its rivals). Those papers were lent out by libraries, read out in taverns and rented by the hour" (source)

This was a watershed moment for politics – for the first time, masses of ordinary people were engaged with a political matter and due to the pressures of public opinion, the Bill was defeated and the support of the public led to Caroline emerging victorious against her unpopular husband.



Brandenburgh House, Caroline's home in Hammersmith (image via Wikimedia Commons)

Sadly, Caroline did not long survive the defeat of the Bill of Pains and Penalties. Three weeks after George IV's ostentatious coronation, at which Caroline had been noisily refused entry to the ceremony, Caroline died. She had fallen ill soon after the coronation, dying either of cancer or an intestinal obstruction on 7th August 1821. She was 53 years old.

Caroline's funeral posed a problem for George and his government. Caroline's will had instructed that she be buried in her native Brunswick, and it was feared that the procession of her coffin from Brandenburgh

House through London to the port of Harwich would draw unruly crowds. An attempt was made to divert the cortege's route outside of London, but angry crowds gathered to block routes out of the city, forcing the procession through the middle of the city. The chaos that ensued led to troops firing on the crowds, and two men – Richard Honey and George Francis – were killed.

The Manchester Guardian (18th August 1821) reported that:

It became necessary [for the Guards] to force a way for the procession through whatever impediments might present themselves. The people were equally bent on turning the procession, and forcing it into the route of the city. Here a contest arose, and here, we deeply regret to say, blood was shed!

Some stones and mud were thrown at the military, and a magistrate being present, the soldiers were sanctioned in firing their pistols and carbines at the unarmed crowd. Screams of terror were heard in every direction. The number of shots fired was not less than forty or fifty. So completely did the soldiery appear at this period to have lost the good temper and forbearance they previously evinced, that they fired shots in the direction in which the procession was moving.

The two men who lost their lives were ordinary working men. Here the story might have ended, with the men disappearing into a common grave and eventually being forgotten. However, the dead men's friends and colleagues raised money to provide the large headstone which still survives today. The stirring, daring inscription reads:

Here lie interred the mortal remains of Richard Honey, Carpenter, aged 36 years, and of George Francis, Bricklayer, aged 43 years, who were slain on the 14th August, 1821, while attending the funeral of Caroline, of Brunswick, Queen of England The details of that melancholy event Belong to the history of the country In which they will be recorded Together with the public opinion Decidedly expressed relative to the Disgraceful transactions Of that disastrous day Deeply impressed with their fate Unmerited and unavenged Their respective trades interred them At their general expence [sic] On the 24th of the same month to their memory. Richard Honey left one female orphan. George Francis left a widow and three young children. Victims like these have fallen in every age Stretch of pow'r or party's cruel rage Until even handed justice comes at last To amend the future and avenge the past Their friends and fellow-men lament their doom

Protect their orphans, and erect their tomb.

Although organised labour as we would recognise it today was then in its infancy – in the early 1820s trade unions were officially illegal – the inscription on this large tombstone, paid for by the donations of ordinary working people, shows the solidarity between Caroline's working class supporters and their determination that their fallen comrades would not be forgotten.

The inquest into the deaths recorded a verdict of "wilful murder against a life guardsman unknown" for Francis and manslaughter for Honey, who unlike Francis did not die at the scene but succumbed

a few hours later to his injuries. The fact that no individual was ever named or prosecuted for the deaths was picked up upon by commentators at the time, as the cartoon below shows.



A caricature by George Cruikshank (source)

Brandenburgh House is long gone, demolished not long after Caroline's death, but Hammersmith has not forgotten her. Queen Caroline Street runs close to St Paul's church where the two shot men lie at rest, even though their surroundings are completely changed from that of the little riverside churchyard they were orignally buried in. Their grave is well worth a visit to see the inscription, a moving example of solidarity amongst the working classes.

For a more detailed account of Caroline's scandalous trial and its political fallout, I recommend the entertaining book "Rebel Queen"

by Jane Robins.

This post originally appeared on Historical Trinkets on 13th August 2012.

8 comments

1. rose52drs

July 19, 2014 at 5:32 am

Really neat post. Thanks!

1. Caroline

July 19, 2014 at 1:16 pm

Thank you - glad you enjoyed it!

2. runner500

September 10, 2014 at 8:20 am

That's really interesting; I only really knew about Caroline of Brunswick's early years in London because she lived in Montagu House which was at the SW corner of Greenwich Park. Oddly all that remains of the House is a bath, which is a little ironic because rumour has it that George found her a bit smelly.

1. Caroline

September 10, 2014 at 9:47 am

Yes, by all accounts she wasn't the stereotypical pretty princess and wasn't too fond of baths! She's an interesting one, though, and very unlucky to end up with the odious George IV!

3. You have an uncanny knack for posting about events/people/places I'd just been reading about elsewhere. Excellent post, as usual!

1. Caroline

September 19, 2014 at 10:32 pm

Thank you! I'm not sure about an "uncanny knack" – I've been away this week so the Twitter feed has mostly been scheduled in advance!

1. A. Weathers says:

September 20, 2014 at 2:32 am

~grins~ Given that by 'uncanny knack' I mean 'fascinating coincidence', I stand by what I said

4. Pingback: Hammersmith Bridge: tales of bombs, boat races and Bazalgette | Flickering Lamps

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Family photobombed by 'ghostly figure carrying a baby' at haunted castle

By Aidan Scott 13:56, 28 NOV 2016 Updated 14:46, 28 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Bill Andrew, 78, was taking a picture of his family in front of Crathes Castle when they noticed what look like a ghostly apparition in one of its doorways



A family has been photobombed by a "ghost holding a baby" at a haunted castle.

Bill Andrew, 78, was taking a picture of his family in front of the castle when they noticed what look like a ghostly apparition in one of its doorways.

The shadowy sighting is not the first at Crathes Castle near Banchory, Aberdeenshire, which already has its fair share of ghost stories.

Bill, from Bridge of Alford, was visiting the

castle earlier this month with daughter Coleen Marsh, 60, who lives in Kent.



His granddaughter Jessica Hockley, who is in her 30s, and great-grandson Findley Hockley, three, who also live in Kent, were there as well.

He took the picture of his family in front of the castle but it was only afterwards that Coleen spotted the strange figure in a doorway in the background.

Bill said: "My family had come up from England for a week to stay with me and we thought it would be good to go along and see the castle.



"I didn't know it had this reputation of being haunted and having ghosts appearing all the time, to be honest.

"When the picture was taken I didn't notice anything, but my daughter had a look and it did seem that something was standing in the "I'm not sure if it was a ghost or not and I'm not really clued up on the fact or fiction of the castle, but it's definitely something interesting to remember."

Coleen contacted staff to see if there was an explanation for the ghostly sighting as the door was closed.



Crathes Castle

The property manager James Henderson said: "There have been a number of mysterious sightings in and around the castle of late, in particular around Halloween, and the castle guides have reported that things have felt strange.

"They have reported a chill down the back in an otherwise warm room, odd noises in an otherwise empty building.

"Could this photograph be related to this? Or, perhaps it is a sighting of the Green Lady."

The Green Lady is almost always spotted in the same room in the castle, carrying an infant child.

Legend has it that the skeletons of a woman and child were discovered under the castle's fireplace during renovations, and that even Queen Victoria witnessed the apparition.

Another ghost, thought to be Lady Agnes, has been spotted at the castle. She is said to have died suddenly after she poisoned her son's sweetheart.

Lady Agnes is said to only reappear on the anniversary of her death.

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Famous Edinburgh pub ends long-standing Christmas boycott

scotsman.com



10:0211:12Friday 25 November 2016

IT'S the renowned Capital pub that's developed a reputation for having a unique approach to hospitality.

With an unwelcoming sign outside daring punters to break its strict rules, its good tidings have never extended beyond warning customers that Christmas celebrations should be taken elsewhere.

But now it seems The Canny Man's in Morningside is no longer saying Bah Humbug

– by advertising itself as the perfect location for turkey and all the trimmings.

For just £25.95 per person, parties of up to 20 people can feast on a delicious traditional three-course meal, washed down with whiskies and spirits.

And as if that wasn't welcoming enough, vegetarian options will also be provided.

The Canny Man's, which was formerly owned by the late Watson Kerr, used to proudly hang signs warning "no office parties", "no Christmas decorations" and "no festive lunch" to scare off seasonal pub-goers.

But now a new sign has been placed outside the venue advertising the festive fayre.

One former regular told the News: "It's so hard to believe they've decided to serve Christmas lunches because it's well known for being an awkward pub. I was gobsmacked. I used to go there quite regularly and they had strict rules on who was allowed in.

"I remember there being a sign reading 'No smoking, no credit cards, no cameras, no backpackers'. It's had a complete turnaround because it used to actively discourage Christmas revellers."

The Canny Man's, on Morningside Road, is now run by the late Mr Kerr's family and remains a popular hotspot for locals. In many ways, the family have maintained his traditions.

In years gone by, it was a pub where only familiar faces would be welcome, and if Mr Kerr was not fond of the way a customer was dressed, he would immediately ask them to leave.

In the 1990s, he'd had enough of Christmas revellers bespoiling the Canny Man's image and displayed a sign that read: "NO OFFICE PARTIES. This means: DO NOT ASK. The answer is NO. And do not bring the remnants of paper-hatted clowns back here. They won't get served and you'll be barred."

It went on: "There will be NO Christmas decorations. This means I don't want anyone cutting down a tree on my behalf – and I'm not a friend of the earth. No festive lunch. This means be truly thankful I'm not going to serve Christmas pudding, give you a cracker, and charge you double ... I'm serving

lunch as usual and you'll have to wait as usual and more than likely the food will be cold by the time you get it, as usual. NO FREE NIPS. This means that you have not had a drink on the house this year and you will not be getting one. So don't ask."

And it concluded: "Having said all of that, have a nice Christmas and New Year."

courtney.cameron@jpress.co.uk

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clickorlando.com

Man, 82, arrested for shooting at woman when she returned from store, deputies...

Strange Florida

Posted: 3:14 PM, November 17, 2016 Updated: 4:02 PM, November 17, 2016



Headline Goes Here

TARPON SPRINGS, Fla. - A former librarian at a Florida elementary school is suing for negligence, alleging that a toilet at the school exploded, hitting her with porcelain shards.

According to the lawsuit, Anne
Burson said a maintenance crew
was working on the water lines at
Tarpon Springs Fundamental
Elementary in 2012. A toilet
exploded earlier in the day, sending
pieces of porcelain across the

bathroom stall. Workers cleaned the restroom and told her it was safe to use.

Burson, who turns 69 on Friday, said she returned later in the day to use another toilet and was injured when it exploded after she flushed it. The Tampa Bay Times reported Thursday that the lawsuit said she suffered a leg injury.

A city spokeswoman would not comment on the lawsuit.

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Christof Koepsel/Getty Images

For the Only Person Ever Hit by a Meteorite, the Real Trouble **Began Later**

smithsonianmag.com

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December 2016 magazine cover

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The "Hodges meteorite" brought problems to the woman it struck, but good fortune to at least one neighbor



Not the meteorite that struck Ann Hodges, this five-inch-long chunk was recovered from Siberia. (H. Raab/Wikimedia Commons) By Kat Eschner smithsonian.com November 30, 2016 11:15AM

Only one person in recorded history has

ever been directly hit by a meteorite.

Ann Hodges, 34, was napping under quilts on her couch in Sylacauga, Alabama, on November 30, 1954, when a nine-pound meteorite came through the ceiling and bounced off a radio before hitting her in the thigh. It left a deep bruise and catapulted her into both quiet fame and a major legal dispute with her landlady, who thought she rightfully owned the rock.

Ann's bruise, seen in a photo in *Time*, looks painful. But the real trouble started for Ann after the meteor strike, writes Phil Plait for Slate. Between the protracted court battle with her landlady and the media attention, Hodges' mental and physical health went downhill, he writes. She separated from her husband and eventually died of kidney failure in a nursing home at the age of 52.

The meteorite did bring good fortune to one of her neighbors. Julius Kempis McKinney, a local farmer, found a chunk of the "Hodges meteorite" that was less than half as big as the one that struck the woman it was then named after. McKinney told his postman, writes the Decatur Daily, who helped him get a lawyer to negotiate the sale of his find. In the end, he made enough money to buy a car and a house.

Another neighbor, Bill Field, told the *Daily* he remembered seeing the meteorite as a five-year-old. "I was standing in the back yard with my mother, who was at the clothesline," he told the newspaper. "I remember this object shooting across the sky with a white trail that I pointed out to my mother. There was a loud boom and black smoke."

Sixty-two years after her brush with the heavens. Hodges remains the only well-documented case of somebody being hit by a meteorite. But humans have continued to be affected by space junk. In 1992, a meteorite blazed across the sky in Peekskill, New York, before striking a woman's parked car. The repair bill probably stung a bit, but she wasn't injured in the strike. In 2003, a 40-pound meteorite crashed through the roof of another home, this time in New Orleans, though fortunately no one was hurt. And in 2007, a meteorite strike made people sick in Peru when it released arsenic fumes from an underground water source, writes Brian Howard for National Geographic. In 2013, a meteorite exploded over central Russia. The resulting shock wave injured 1200 people and caused \$33 million in damage.

As Hodges's unique case demonstrates, the odds are on our side when it comes to meteor strikes. One scientist found the lifetime odds of dying from a meteor strike near you to be 1:1,600,000—to put that in perspective, your odds of being struck by lightning are 1:135,000. The odds of dying as the result of a meteor strike anywhere in the world—like the kind of rare but catastrophic geologic event that shapes an eon—are 1:75,000.

The odds of winning the PowerBall lottery? 1:195,249,054. Stop buying lotto tickets and watch out for meteorites, folks.

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yahoo.com



REUTERS ReutersNovember 25, 2016



View photos French climber Alain Robert. also known as "The French Spiderman", scales the 38story skyscraper Torre Agbar in Barcelona, Spain, November 25, 2016. REUTERS/Albert Gea

BARCELONA (Reuters) -French "Spiderman" Alain Robert scaled one of the tallest skyscrapers in

Barcelona without a harness on Friday.

Bystanders and police watched as the 54-year-old climbed up and then descended the Torre Agbar, a glass-covered office building known for its night-time illuminations, completing the feat in around one hour.

The urban climber is famous for his daredevil, harness-free approach to scuttling up buildings with nothing more than some chalk on his hands and climbing shoes on his feet.

Robert has conquered over 100 structures worldwide including San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, Dubai's Burj Khalifa complex, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Sydney Opera House without safety equipment.

(Reporting by Albert Gea; Writing by Amanda Calvo; Editing by Sonya Dowsett/Mark Heinrich)

bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

16 November 2016



The work depicts Judith taking a dagger to the throat of Holofemes - the full image can be seen below

Image copyright EPA

An advert for an art exhibition in central Germany has drawn complaints from parents who find the 17th-Century Italian masterpiece it shows too disturbing for children.

Residents in the town of Heppenheim were horrified when a poster showing Judith Slaying Holofernes - the best-known work of early Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi - went up on an advertising column, local broadcaster HR reports. The painting is on loan from Naples for an exhibition of Italian Baroque art at the nearby Wiesbaden

Museum. It features a rather graphic Old Testament scene: the Israelite heroine Judith cutting off the head of an invading Assyrian general.

The bloody motif was wildly popular among Renaissance and Baroque artists including Donatello, Titian and Caravaggio, but some locals think it's unsuitable for a public place. "My children asked me why this man is being killed," one mother tells local paper the Darmstadt Echo. She says it shouldn't be on a school route at the eyelevel of children: "This could give them nightmares."

Museum director Alexander Klar defended the poster, saying many traditional images could be similarly criticised. "Have you ever seen children stand horrified in front of Christ nailed to the cross?" he asks the paper, adding that the work aims to arouse pity and get people to think about the nature of cruelty.

But Olivia Rebensburg, head of Hesse's Child Protection Society, tells HR there's legitimate concern about the kind of images children see.

The museum isn't taking the posters down immediately but says it will gradually remove around 1,000 from across the region as their leases run out. As for the one in Heppenheim, it says it could be moved higher - out of children's view.

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Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.ukSunday 20 Nov 2016 11:56 am



Girl, 11, finds wanted man hiding in her closet

looked up and saw the man's reflection in her mirror.

Presley Brown, 11, was 'scared to death' after a wanted man emerged from her closet (Picture: KXII)

An 11-year-old girl was left 'scared to death' after she opened her closet and discovered a wanted man hiding inside.

Presley Brown, from Oklahoma, had been using her phone in her en suite bathroom when she

As he emerged from her walk-in closet, he told her: 'Don't be scared, little girl.'

Presley immediately started screaming, which alerted her father, who then tackled the man before he fled with \$100 of her birthday money.



Girl, 11, finds wanted man in her closet Credit: KXII

She had been playing on her phone when the man emerged and said: 'Don't be scared, little girl'.(Picture: KXII)

Presley told WNEP-TV: 'I started screaming bloody murder. I hope no other men come in my closet.'

The girl's mother, Monica Brown, described hearing her daughter's panic.

She said: 'We hear her scream...

We meet her in the hallway. She's literally, she's just crying. He could have put his hand over her mouth.

'Who knows what could have happened, but now it just makes us a lot more aware.'

Race Cox, 26, who was wanted on at least on felony warrant, is being held in Carter County Jail (Picture: Carter County Sheriff's Office)

Earlier in the day, builders had warned the family that they had seen somebody running through the home.

After ringing police, the suspect, identified as Race Cox, 26, was caught.



Girl, 11, finds wanted man in her closet Credit: Carter County Sheriff's Office

Cox, who was wanted on at least one felony warrant, is being held in Carter County Jail on a \$40,000 (£32,000) bail bond.

Since the incident, Presley said she's now too scared to go into her bathroom.

'Every time I come in my closet or my room or my bathroom, anywhere, I just think about it and like I remember how scary it was.'

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GOP Gov. Snyder's office says Detroit school kids have no right to literacy

rawstory.com



Brad Reed 21 Nov 2016 at 13:28 ET



Boy in a tree reading his book (Shutterstock)

The state of Michigan is being sued because several schools in Detroit are failing to teach

children how to read, and Gov. Rick Snyder's team of lawyers has come up with a novel defense.

According to local news station CBS Detroit, Gov. Snyder's attorneys are claiming that children who are taught within the state's school systems have no fundamental right to literacy, which means that the state isn't liable if its schools fail to educate them.

The lawsuit, which was filed on behalf of Detroit students' families by a California public interest firm, argues that children in Detroit have been fundamentally deprived of their rightful education thanks to neglect by Michigan's state government.

"Decades of State disinvestment in and deliberate indifference to Detroit schools have denied Plaintiff schoolchildren access to the most basic building block of education: literacy," the suit alleges, while also claiming that the schools' "slum-like conditions" render them "functionally incapable of delivering access to literacy."

CBS Detroit notes that a report from five years ago found that nearly half of all students in Detroit schools were functionally illiterate.

Report typos and corrections to corrections@rawstory.com

Grandmother finds mummified missing grandson in home where he was last seen

By Patrick Lion 15:49, 3 DEC 2016 Updated 17:40, 3 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Dyquain Rogers, 21, was reported missing on November 4, 2014, after being last seen in his own home



A grandmother has discovered the mummified body of her missing grandson in the home where he was last seen more than two years ago.

Dyquain Rogers, 21, was reported missing on November 4, 2014, after being seen in his Erie, Pennsylvania, home.

His last Facebook post on October 31 was: "I'm just gonna keep eating pretzels."

Rogers' grandmother contacted police on Wednesday after finding the body when she

heard "a thump" and found his body in the attic.

"I fell on my knees when I found out," Erica Jeffries-Jordan told GoErie.com .



"I have been looking for Dyquain for so long," she continued. "It really hurt me bad."

But some relatives had demanded an autopsy after the coroner said the death was likely a suicide.

There was no evidence of foul play, the website reported.

"I don't believe any of this stuff," Ms Jeffries-Jordan said. "I want answers."

Have You Seen This Mysterious Silver Spaceship Tank Around Brooklyn?

gothamist.com

by Ben Yakas in Arts & Entertainment on Dec 6, 2016 9:05 am



Peanutpickle10

Catching a sight of Ecto-1 parked outside your apartment is neat but unexceptional; being awoken by a cacophonous car fire is irritating but basic; seeing a subway car floating through the streets is certainly an eyebrow-raiser, but even MTA vehicles have gotta get from A to B somehow. But a spaceship/tank hybrid with Midwest plates in the heart of yupster Brooklyn? It should be illegal to be cynical about such a thing (even if it's probably illegal to drive it).

"It was parked in front of 10 Ft Single at N 6th and Meeker in Williamsburg," Reddit user Peanutpickle10, who spotted the vehicle last Saturday, told us. "There were two men,

likely father [and] son pair, with no shoes, showing the car off to residents at 277 N 6th Street. It was definitely driving and something that's been spotted around the area recently."

Indeed, it's caught the eye of people all around the borough, parked in Bushwick, roaming around Fort Greene, and cruising down the blocks in Prospect Heights. Another person who spotted it noted, "I caught sight of the driver and he was a total hipster." The license plate of the vehicle seems to indicate it's registered in Montana, so maybe that's the new Omaha.

Thanks to some well-versed Redditors and our own imaginations, we have a few guesses as to what the vehicle actually is:

- -A Burning Man structure (as one Burner friend put it to me, "Not one I'm sure I've seen, but it does look like a BM art car")
- -Badonkadonk Land Cruiser/Tank
- -A real spaceship, they have spaceships in Montana now, look it up
- -Gru's car from Despicable Me
- -Jabba The Hut's barge
- -A discarded prop from the original production of *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (not the Keanu Reeves/Jaden Smith joint)
- -This tank from Avatar: The Last Airbender
- -Leonardo Da Vinci's tank design

Do you know the deal with this contraption? Have you seen it around town? Did it abduct you? Can it eradicate Donald Trump? Let us know in the comments.

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Hollywood Subway: Downtown Los Angeles' Abandoned Underground Railway | Urban Ghosts

urbanghostsmedia.com

Urban Ghosts Media

Moran / 28 July 2014

In Abandoned & Urbex, North America / By Tom



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles

(All images (unless stated) courtesy of Alissa Walker, reproduced with permission)

The LA subway has never been one of the city's most popular destinations, and doesn't seem to garner the same respect as other underground railways such as those of London, Paris and New York. But it may come as a surprise to some – including urban explorers unfamiliar with Los Angeles – that, like those of Cincinnati and Rochester, downtown LA is home to another older subway system that has been abandoned for decades.



subway-terminal-building-los-angeles

(Image: Los Angeles, cc-sa-3.0)

hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-2

block away from the LA Metro's current Red Line, a luxury apartment building known as Metro 417 occupies a 1925 Renaissance Revival structure originally called the Subway Terminal Building. It was here, several stories below street level, that Hill Street station served 65,000 commuters each day at its peak in the mid-1940s. And as journalist Alissa Walker discovered during a tour of the building, the abandoned ghost station on the so-called 'Hollywood Subway' still exists, a silent timewarp beneath the busy streets of downtown LA.

Passing through an unassuming door that separated the building's upscale public areas from its less visited corners, the tour literally stepped back in time. Ornate tiles lined the walls below a decaying ceiling that revealed its original craftsmanship above. Descending further, a sub-floor left visitors in no doubt that the space they were in was an old subway station, similar in style to those found in New York City.

Just

а





An arrow on the wall

hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-3

hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-4



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-6



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-hill-street-station

572

hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-7

pointed the way to Hill Street station, the original terminus of the Pacific Electric Railway's Hollywood Subway branch. Other signage, untouched for decades, identified tracks one and two, their rails long since removed.



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-8

From here, a ramp descends to the platform. The vast open space, empty since the 1950s, give way to a series of dark, damp tunnels that once catered to busy trains operating between the Westlake neighbourhood and downtown Los Angeles.



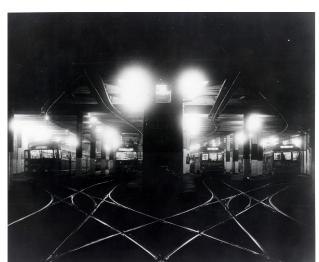
hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-9

But ridership peaked in 1944 and thereafter passenger numbers began to decline, fueled by competition from automobiles and an improved freeway system connecting the LA metro area. On the morning of June 19, 1955 the last passenger train rumbled through the tunnels, ominously displaying a banner that read "To Oblivion" as it echoed into history.



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-belmont-tunnel

Soon after, tracks were torn up and the tunnels were sealed off. Nowadays, Pershing Square station on the LACMTA Red Line services the city's downtown. Other remnants of the Hollywood Subway, meanwhile, can be seen at Toluca Substation and Yard, a designated historic monument by the sealed entrance to the original Belmont Tunnel.



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-10

Unfortunately, early 2014 spelled bad news for the historic Hollywood Subway. Alissa Walker reported on her blog that "according to Metro 417 the tunnels are now condemned and no longer available for touring of any kind".



hollywood-subway-abandoned-los-angeles-11

Whether this means the abandoned subway tunnels will be filled-in forever, or simply cocooned beneath the busy downtown, remains to be seen. (Read more at LAist.)



Boston: Tremont Street Subway's Abandoned Southern Branch

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Three-time Olympian gymnast in horror accident at Cirque Du Soleil circus

By Anthony Bond 07:55, 27 NOV 2016 Updated 14:53, 27 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Horror accident at Cirque Du Soleil after three-time Olympian gymnast plummets to the ground during trapeze show

Lisa Skinner, 35, lost consciousness after falling from about five metres during the show in Brisbane, Australia



A three-time Olympian gymnast has been seriously injured after falling during a trapeze show at the Cirque Du Soleil circus.

Lisa Skinner, 35, lost consciousness after falling from about five metres during the show in Brisbane, Australia today.

The Commonwealth gold medalist who is now a circus performer was rushed to hospital where she is now

being treated.

It is not yet known how badly injured she is but there are fears she could have spinal injuries.

It is thought Skinner fell from a ring suspended in the air.



Witnesses say the show was stopped while she was taken from the stage by paramedics before the show resumed.

It is not yet known how badly injured she is but there are fears she could have spinal injuries.

lain Park was watching the performance when the accident happened.

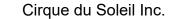
He said: "At Cirque de Soleil in bris, performer fell from apparatus from about 5m onto stage - did not move. 15 min delay while

paramedics attended & shipped to hospital. Could be very bad outcome, noise of impact was not good

Lisa Skinner competed at the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games.

She has also won gold medals at the Commonwealth Games and now tours with the Cirque du Soleil performing solo aerial hoops.





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How a dildo spat is shaking up east German politics

8/11 thelocal.de

THE LOCAL de





How a dildo spat is shaking up east German politics

The Local · 25 Nov 2016, 17:24

Published: 25 Nov 2016 17:22

GMT+01:00

Updated: 25 Nov 2016 17:24

GMT+01:00

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Saxony has picked a fight with a more mainstream party politician. But it's not about immigration or foreign policy - it's about sex toys.

Each year the Free State of Saxony

holds a competition called futureSAX for startups and fledgling businesses with innovative ideas . The winners then receive money to go towards developing their novel products.

This year a silent vibrator won third place with a €5,000 prize. The noise-less sex toy hopes to be a boon for those particularly annoyed by normal ones, including an elderly woman in Cologne who earlier this year got into a row involving police about a "farting, kissing" vibrator she purchased.

But not everyone was so impressed with the invention.

The far-right AfD's vice chair in Saxony, Thomas Hartung, wrote in a statement on November 7th that the rewarding the vibrator by company Laviu was "a pathetic display". He went on to foist blame onto state economy minister Martin Dulig, whose ministry oversees the contest.

He also gave Dulig the quaint nickname of "Dildo-Dulig".

"Whoever considers the development of a silent vibrator to be innovative and gives it third place in the 'futureSAX' competition must ask themselves about their own understanding of technology," Hartung wrote.

"Saxony used to be proud of inventions... like the mechanical loom or Germany's first functionally-built steam locomotive, but now it's supposed to be proud of sex toys," he added, also bragging about Saxony's apparent invention of a drum washing machine, which some may in fact use as an alternative to the invention he condemned.

Hartung criticized Dulig's Social Democratic Party (SPD) for trying to pose as a "family party".

"The promotion of sex toys is quite the opposite of this," he said, insinuating that those who use vibrators for self pleasure then don't have sex and procreate.

The name "Dildo-Dulig" has stuck among Saxon AfD members, with Hartung's economic affairs colleague Mario Beger using it last week while claiming Dulig had not done enough to expand broadband internet in the state.

"Next to last place in Germany: 'Dildo-Dulig' is letting Saxony's broadband expansion fall by the wayside," Beger said in a statement. Beger was citing a ranking that showed Saxony has the second-worst Internet speed nationwide.

"If he is ever active in his ministerial role, he's distributing awards to dildo-makers," Beger said of Dulig.

"If he no longer feels like [expanding broadband] - or even cannot - he still has the option to apply to be the new Sexual Minister of Saxony."

Dulig himself has not personally given a statement about his new pet name, though a spokesman did make it clear to broadcaster Sachsen Fernsehen how the minister felt.

"The AfD expects, though not seriously, that Minister Dulig will jump on and react to this painfully cheap little notion from the 1950s," the spokesman said.

"If dildos are a scandal for the AfD in the year 2016, and they want to disparage an innovative company, that is their issue and says something more about the party."

The Local (news@thelocal.de)

Inaccurate drug test lands Draper couple in jail for two and a half months

by Chris Jones Monday, October 31st 2016

kutv.com



Inaccurate drug test lands Draper couple in jail for two and a half months. (Photo: KUTV)

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH (KUTV) Gale Griffin and her husband

Wendell Harvey are truck drivers who have been transporting explosives for the military for years.

They have top security clearance, and they've never been in trouble with the law. So in May, while driving through Arkansas, they weren't concerned when police stopped them in Fort Chaffee.

"We have no relationship with anyone who deals drugs," said Harvey, who is a former police officer.

Harvey watched as the police pulled three baggies filled with baking soda out of the cab of the truck.

"I told them, 'That's baking soda," Harvey said.

The police then tested the substance.

"We tested it three different times," said Chuck Bowen with Fort Chaffee Police. "We got a positive conclusion each time we tested."

With that, police informed the couple they were in legal trouble.

"He said, 'You have over \$3,000 in cocaine," Griffin said.

"I told him, 'I've never had two nickels to rub together, are you crazy?'" Griffin said. "Then [the police officer] said, 'I've never had two nickels to rub together either, but now I'm the owner of your truck."

He went on to say the police confiscated their truck, put them behind bars and held the couple on \$10,000 bail.

"I felt cut off from reality; it felt very strange — someplace that doesn't feel like America to me," Harvey said.

The couple spent two-and-a-half months in jail, unable to make bail.

"It was just crawling with bugs — it was unbelievably cold, blasting, blasting cold air," Griffin said.

She said she was only allowed out of her cell for an hour a day and the conditions where horrible.

"For the first three or four weeks, I just shivered. I didn't have any socks," Griffin said.

Eventually, the state of Arkansas tested the substance at the insistence of the Arkansas Public Defender's office. All the test came back negative, meaning the white powdery substance was not cocaine.

How could this happen? In part, it is due to the field test that most law enforcement across the country uses.

The test for cocaine is called the Scott Reagent Field test, costs \$2 each and it is used by almost all law enforcement agencies, including those in Utah.

"They are not infallible; they are subject to misreading," said Greg Parrish with the Arkansas Public Defender's Office.

Data appears to back that up.

In Las Vegas, authorities reexamined a sampling of field tests conducted from 2010 to 2013 and found that 33 percent of them had resulted in false positives. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement says 21 percent of evidence they believed to be meth, was, after further testing, not meth at all.

Studies also show that more than 100,000 people are convicted or plead guilty to drug charges based on these tests each year.

Most Utah law enforcement agencies uses some form of these tests.

"I'm not saying it doesn't happen — it's just I'm not aware of a case we've dealt with where that is the case," said Sgt. Spencer Cannon with the Utah County Sheriff's office.

He said his agency uses the test as a way to get probable cause, and he feels they are reasonably accurate.

After Cannon showed 2News' Chris Jones how to use one of the substance tests, Jones went online and purchased the same test police use.

Using household items like Comet, aspirin, cold medicine and chocolate, four of the 10 items resulted in a false positive.

Salt Lake County Prosecutor Sim Gill said that if there are problems with the test that is concerning — or if the District Attorney's office takes a drug case to trial — the evidence must undergo a more accurate laboratory test.

"If the prosecution is going to move forward, we are going to insist on that it has a lab test or a [toxicology] review is done that will actually confirm that the substance in the field is what the officer believed it to be," Gill said.

As for Harvey and Griffin, they only recently got their truck back from Arkansas authorities. But they say the truck has major damage that requires repairs.

The couple also said they have not worked since they were released from jail. They said they are still trying to get their security clearance reinstated, and that they are running out of money.

Harvey said what is especially concerning to him and his wife is the fact that other people may have been victimized by this test.

"If they did what they did to us, you know — two law abiding citizens, there's no telling how many mistakes they've made."

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MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

A Lost England? Incredible black and white photos reveal what life was like for people in the 19th and early 20th centuries and how the issues they faced were not so different than the ones we do today

English flooding is certainly not a new phenomenon, as demonstrated by this archive of

photographs

- More than 1,200 photographs revealing late 19th and early 20th-century England have been released
- Lost England 1870-1930 shows resemblances between issues we face today and those of 100 years ago

By Rachael Burford For Mailonline

Published: 13:42 EST, 24 November 2016 | Updated: 20:34 EST, 24 November 2016

Incredible photos, released for the first time, show what life was like in late 19th and early 20thcentury Britain.

More than 1,200 black and white photos are published for the first time together in the book Lost England 1870-1930.

Some of the amazing images show people dealing with the issues we still face today, including flooding in towns and cities.

Others show factory workers, some of them children, lined up and operating huge machinery.

The British labour force is particularly well documented with stunning photos showing builders working on the Manchester Ship Canal in 1889, traders at Newcastle's Bigg market in 1920 and female munitions factory workers building bombs in 1917.



Ironmongers in Maidenhead, Berkshire have their photo taken taken during break in 1900



Cunard Shell Works in Birkenhead in 1917. The women are making weapons that were shipped over to France during WWI

A Thanksgiving getaway fit for a President! Inside the VERY... London's ghost stations: Eerie images by an 'urban explorer'... Britain's largest stately home is saved for the nation as...



Children in a country lane, Dinton, Buckinghamshire, 1904. The child on the left is in a rather basic perambulator, which was thought to be good for the health

J Plater's Cart, Van & Carriage Works in Haddenham, Buckinghamshire in 1903. Young apprentices who are barely 12 years old can be seen working alongside the men

Construction workers pause to have their picture taken while building the Manchester Ship Canal in 1889





Residents in the aptly named Lake Street in New Hinskey, Oxfordshire deal with flooding in 1890





The Picture House in Liverpool (pictured left in 1912), which has since been demolished. Pictured right in 1891 is Sunderland Town Hall. The building was demolished in 1971 after a controversial £50,000 investment

Women in dark

dresses and aprons are pictured working in neat rows at the Cellular Clothing Company factory in Swindon in 1902

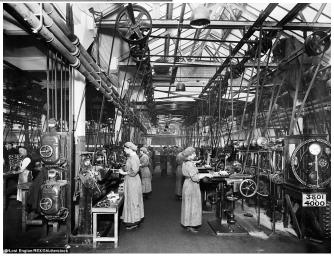




Traders at work in Newcastle's Bigg Market in 1920. The Town Hall (pictured centre) was demolished in 1973

Women work at machines at the Birmingham Small Arms Company factory in 1917







Circus performers bring their instruments and exotic animals to Taplow in Buckinghamshire in 1885



Mechanised farming in Hellidon, 1902. Even young children (pictured front centre) were expected to help work the fields

An interior view of ward six at the Leeds General Infirmary in 1895

Pictured left in 1866 is the junction of Steep Steet and Trenchard Street in Bristol, and right is the Cotton Exchange, Birmingham in 1907







Southport Opera House is pictured in 1900 - 21 years before it was destroyed by a fire

More than 1,200 historic photos of Britain are published in Lost England 1870-1930 by Philip **Davis**



Comments (73

The comments below have been moderated in advance.

the_major, Horsham, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

And not a high viz jacket, hard hat, safety boots, safety goggles in sight. Lovely photos of a distant past.

GKKJ, UK, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

What comes across is how people took pride in their work, communities and surroundings, even though materially they may not have had much. Every picture from the spotlessly clean hospital to the attractive architecture reflects people who made an effort to contribute to a country they cared about.

Black Bart, Dodge City, Chad, about 6 hours ago

This will also be 2021 post-Brexit Britain too. :-(

Ex59er, Plymouth, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

First photos I've seen on here with no pouting wannabes or Leftie Luvvies. I like the old photos much more

flowers1946, Chorley, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

We should now cherish our British Heritage ... plenty enough people on Facebook with the 'then and now' Textiles for one ...,being to be told we should be diverse (the new word..).

veebs, Ayr, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

I'd rather be there then, than here now ...

Jake7, Glasgow, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

Some really beautiful old buildings, from when architect, s had some semblance of Taste.

HowardTheDuck, Manchesterford, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

Buckinghamshire is still as rough as.

Angle of the morning, Dangle, Bolivia, about 7 hours ago

' We 'ad lot's of thing in those days they don't have today , Ricketts , Diphtheria ,Kaiser Bill , eeeeh and we did look good going' t' School with all our little 'eads painted purple, 'cos we 'ad Ringworm '.....?

Not Triggered, DC, United States, about 7 hours ago

No Mobiles No-one taking a selfie, No satellite dishes or TV aerials, No litter.

The views expressed in the contents above are those of our users and do not necessarily reflect the views of MailOnline.

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Inside Bolivia's Skull Festival, Where the Dead Get Diamonds and Sunglasses atlasobscura.com

Inside Bolivia's Skull Festival, Where the Dead Get Diamonds and Sunglasses

"Here death isn't so final."

by Paul Koudounaris November 23, 2016



Four natitas owned by a local woman named Xahina. Only two smoke cigarettes—the others find smoking a dirty habit. All Photos:

Paul Koudounaris

On an overcast November day, Juan Chipon strolled into the chapel at the Cementerio General in La Paz, Bolivia, carrying the skull of his father. While this might sound like the beginning of a horror film, Juan was happy and smiling, and the skull was covered in floral wreaths in celebration. Behind Juan came others, also carrying elaborately decorated skulls.

A local woman named Mariela sauntered in carrying her uncle's skull, a biker hat perched on his forehead and a glistening diamond embedded in one of his front teeth—"yes, it's a real diamond!" she said, offended by the thought that it might be a fake. Behind her

came Xahina, struggling with a large tray of four crania. And following them came thousands more, all part of what is the world's most flamboyant exaltation of the link between the living and the dead, an annual ritual like no other in the world.

The skulls are known locally as *ñatitas* (roughly meaning "the little pug-nosed ones"), and this overcast morning was the beginning of their day. A massive public festival held every November 8, the Fiesta de las *Ñatitas*, gives thanks to the dead, as personified by their very skulls, for a year's worth of friendship and service.



Here on the high plateau of the Andes death has never been a fatalistic concept; those who pass on have simply transcended to another phase of life, and can still function within the family or social group. Keeping a *ñatita* in one's home is considered by many people to provide a great benefit, since the dead are thought to have the ability to offer services to those still living. The skull can provide security for the home, ensure domestic tranquility, aid students in their schoolwork, and provide sage advice.

A *ñatita* can be the skull of a relative, like Juan Chipon's father, but they are just as frequently those of strangers, obtained from medical schools or old cemeteries, who reveal an identity to their new owner in a dream. Normally they are kept in household shrines, but for the

Fiesta they return to the cemetery as a jubilant mass.

At the Cementario General, where the biggest festivity takes place, the event is a veritable postmortem fashion show. Many skulls wear glasses or hats, while others are styled in emulation of those who keep them. Some will be enshrined like relics or carried in like little princes—for the more than 10,000 people in attendance, the effort put into the presentation of one's *ñatita* provides a visible sign of love and esteem.



By mid day, with the celebration in full swing, the cemetery grounds are literally awash in skulls. Devotees wander among them, providing tributes. Cigarettes placed between their jaws and coca leaves are common, but the most prominent are flower petals and crowns, as a reminder of the beautiful things of the natural world. Adding a touch of cacophony, strolling musicians offer deafeningly loud Bolivian dance music to edify the skulls.

The roots of the festival date to the Pre-Columbian world, and surviving records indicate celebrations conforming to the modern festival have been going on in Bolivia since at least the beginning of the 20th century. Beyond that, the history is murky, but that doesn't trouble anyone assembled at the cemetery, because despite the presence of

so many skulls, the focus is not on the past and definitely not on death.

"It's about life, about the future, about gratitude and a bond," explains Xahina, with her four skulls now set up in a makeshift altar in the cemetery grounds. "In your country, maybe the dead really do die," she continues, "but here death isn't so final. It's not a contradiction because the dead are only as dead as you allow them to be. For those of us here, the dead are still very much a vital part of our lives."





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Invercargill prisoners sharing Christmas cheer

Last updated 16:18, November 30 2016



SUPPLIED An Invercargill Prison inmate has created sculptures of mayor Tim Shadbolt and minister Judith Collins to be included in the prison's Christmas tree display at Stadium Southland.

Invercargill prisoner are helping spread cheer at Christmas, by supporting the Waihopai City Lions Club Light up Christmas tree festival.

One prisoner has sculpted papiermâché caricatures of Minister Judith Collins, Mayor Tim Shadbolt and ILT Stadium Southland General Manager, Nigel Skelt to feature in the display.

Acting prison director Mike Rongo said it was important to prisoners and staff that they were involved in

supporting local projects.



SUPPLIED The Christmas tree display at Stadium Southland created by Invercargill Prison inmates.



"The positive feedback to their work gives the men encouragement to continue with these activities and demonstrates that there are easy ways that they can engage and contribute to the community in a good way."

As part of the Christmas tree event, businesses 'rent' a tree from the Lions Club, they decorate the tree and nominate a charity to support.

The public view the trees and vote for their favourite by making a donation. The money goes to the charity nominated by the business.

Prisoners got involved when the prison was approached by the Lions to build the voting boxes.

The 36 boxes were made in the prison as part of the men's constructive activity programme, and, as thanks for building the boxes, the Lions Club offered the

SUPPLIED Tim Shadbolt has been immortilised in papier-mâché. prison a tree to decorate with donations to go toward books for the prison library.

The boxes, decorations and the caricature papier-mâché sculptures have all been created by the prisoners as part of the prison art and constructive activities programme.

Six prisoners made all the decorations from paper, using origami or paper cutting.

The caricature sculptures were made from newspaper and toilet paper, were glued together with soap, water, and wall paper paste, and each took about four weeks to create.

Initially they were coloured with coffee, until the prisoner was give access to paint. The man said he enjoyed "turning something we have in prison into an outstanding piece of art".

"Christmas in prison is awful," the prisoner said.

"You just want the day to hurry up and be over."

After the Christmas tree event, the prisoner is keen to sell the sculptures and that money would also go toward books for the Invercargill Prison library.

For his next project, he hopes to get a group of prisoners to create super heroes for the visits hall of the prison, for a children's charity or Starship Hospital.

The Christmas tree display is at Stadium Southland until December 24.

- Stuff

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Japanese sinkhole that was fixed in two days starts sinking again

metro.co.uk

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukMonday 28 Nov 2016 3:15 pm

Remember the sinkhole that was fixed in two days? It's started sinking again

The sinkhole which appeared last month (Picture: EPA)

It was hailed as a modern engineering miracle. In just two days, a massive sinkhole that opened up at the heart of a Japanese city was fixed.

But it appears as though the joy that it provoked may have been a little premature.

The ground where the sinkhole opened up has started sinking again.

Admittedly, it's only a couple of inches and not the 50ft deep hole that swallowed up five lanes of road and flooded.

On Saturday traffic was blocked from going over the road over fears it could be about to collapse again.

Japanese authorities apologise for the sink hole



That sparked an apology from Fukuoka mayor Soichiro Takashima saying he was sorry that people had not been warned that the ground could sink again.

Previous sinkholes have reopened and it is believed this one may have done the same as sand and cement settles following the speedy reconstruction.

It was repaired within two days (Picture: Getty)
Massive sinkhole opens near subway station in Japan





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JURASSIC MARS: 'Dinosaur's skull found on the Red Planet' in NASA image

express.co.uk



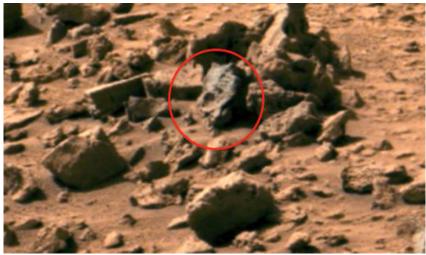
JURASSIC MARS: 'Dinosaur's skull found on the Red Planet' in NASA image

THIS has been hailed by alien ose that used to live on Earth, onc

hunters as undeniable proof that huge dinosaurs, like those that used to live on Earth, once roamed the surface of Mars.

By Jon Austin Jon Austin

PUBLISHED:12:52, Thu, Nov 24, 2016 | UPDATED: 13:07, Thu, Nov 24, 2016



The so-called dinosaur skull found on Mars in NASA image.

A new image appears to show the fossilised head of a large dinosaur has emerged online.

Scott C Waring uploaded the image, which he says he found by scouring through NASA photographs taken in space on Mars by the Curiosity Rover droid, to website ufosightingsdaily.com.

In a blog entitled: "Alien Skull Found On

Mars In Billion Pixel NASA Photo", he wrote: "This is fun, it's a billion pixel photo from Mars and it's got a lot of detail.

"The screenshots above show an alien skull. I have seen other skulls similar to this one, sorry, I lost count, but a lot. So I recognized it right away for what it is.

"Also there was a screaming face (below) with a larger face not far from it. Neither is human but the smaller does have some resemblance to old Mayan carvings."

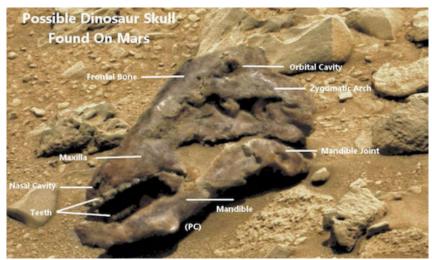
Waring is convinced, after finding an array of alleged evidence in NASA pictures, that the Red Planet was once occupied by the same life forms as here on Earth, including intelligent beings.

A 'dinosaur skull' found by Paranormal Crucible on Mars in July.

- Jurassic Mars: Shock as Fossilised T-rex head 'found on Red Planet'
- 'Conclusive proof dinosaurs once roamed the Red Planet'

It is not the first time an alleged dinosaur skull has been found either.

In July, paranormal investigators released a video showing what was described as being like the skull on Mars of a herbivorous dinosaur.



PARANORMALCRUCIBLE*NASA*YouTube

They even labelled the image, marking out significant parts of the skull, such as teeth, jaw and a nasal cavity.

The Paranormal Crucible YouTube channel uploaded a video about the discovery, saying it could also be a wild horse type creature.

An array of alleged skulls, and other socalled creatures, have allegedly been found in NASA pictures of Mars taken by the Curiosity rover droid, which is exploring the Red Planet.

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Jury convicts man who tried to use Cheetos as an accelerant

yahoo.com

TAUNTON, Mass. (AP) — A Massachusetts man who authorities say attempted to use Cheetos to accelerate a fire at his ex-girlfriend's home while she was inside has been convicted of *Pres* malicious destruction of property.

The Bristol County District Attorney's Office says a jury convicted 31-year-old Shemroy Williams, of Taunton, on Wednesday. He was sentenced to two-and-a-half years behind bars.

Crews responded to a home in March after the woman and her friend reported that Williams was trying to light it on fire.

Authorities say an investigation revealed Williams wedged a propane tank against the house while a fire on the back porch was burning.

Police say they located Williams in the area with two lighters in his pocket and an empty bag of Cheetos. Investigators determined Williams tried to use Cheetos to accelerate the fire.

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As the doctors operated behind a curtain, a panel of experts discussed family planning

Vasectomy operations on men in Kenya have been live streamed from a theatre in the capital as part a campaign to promote the sterilisation procedure.

At least 150 men booked in for the 20minute procedure which involves severing the tubes that carry sperm.

Doctors performed the vasectomies on stage behind a curtain at the Kenyan National Theatre in Nairobi.

Kenyan men considering a vasectomy often fear the stigma of being seen as having lost their masculinity.

The World Vasectomy Day organisation was behind the event, which was broadcast on Facebook and included a panel of experts discussing "the myths and misconceptions about vasectomy".

Campaigners reiterated that it was a safe form of family planning and why it was important in terms of "the country and the planet".

"Many men have this perception that vasectomy causes a man to turn into a woman," Dr Jack Zhang, a Canadian doctor at the event, told the BBC.

"Some men fear that in Africa there's a high mortality rate so they need to have more children."

The BBC's Abdinoor Aden in Nairobi says some of the men who came to have a vasectomy were driven by economic concerns about having a large family.

Others said it was to help their partners.

"The family planning methods my wife was using have had bad effects on her so I opted to go and do vasectomy so that she can be relieved," one man told the BBC.

What is a

vasectomy?

Image caption

• It involves surgically cutting or blocking the tubes that transport sperm from the testicles to the penis



The 20-minute procedure involves blocking the tube that transports sperm

- Afterwards there will be no noticeable difference in the volume of semen, but it will not contain sperm
- It can be reversed, but there is no guarantee it will succeed
- About 50 million men who have received a vasectomy worldwide.

Source: World Vasectomy Day

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Kitten Convoy arrives in Victoria from Prince Albert

2016/11/12 cbc.ca



55 cats and kittens were relocated from Prince Albert to Victoria due to shelter overcrowding

CBC News Posted: Nov 12, 2016 3:44 PM CT Last Updated: Nov 12, 2016 9:03 PM CT



The feline friends faced the possibility of euthanasia due to large numbers of cats being taken in by the Prince Albert SPCA. (CHEK)

The Greater Victoria Animal Crusaders in Victoria, B.C. stepped up to help the Prince Albert SPCA relocate 55 cats and kittens earlier this week.

A large influx of cats and kittens being taken in by Prince Albert's SPCA, meant the felines were in danger of being euthanized if they did not find homes.

"When we heard that these cats were going to get put down, or there was a chance, we couldn't refuse," said Sharene Foord, president of GVAC. "We had to reach out and help."

Adoption applications exceptional

"It has been mayhem here," she said. "We have been working as fast as we can, getting adoptions approved and through."

Foord described the cats as all young and healthy, most of them under a year old.



had to help out after the cats, all young and healthy, faced the possibility of euthanasia. (CHEK)

to be done in three weeks.

GVAC president Sharene Foord said the organization just

On Friday alone, there were more than 70 adoption applications for the feline newcomers at an adoption fair at a PetSmart store in Victoria, Foord said. The B.C. city is full of animal lovers, she added.

"We're very lucky to have so many people here who want to adopt rescues." Foord said she doesn't anticipate any trouble finding homes for the cats.

What's done and done

Julia Fedorak, who is on the board of directors for GVAC, said the cats have received their shots, and treatment for fleas and worms.

The cost of adoption is \$200, which includes a voucher for a spay or neuter.

The kittens have had their first vaccinations with boosters needing

The kittens under six-months-old haven't been fixed yet, Fedorak said. All cats older than six months have been spayed and neutered, received their vaccinations and treatment for worms and fleas.

Fedorak said many animal shelters face overcrowding. The 55 cats which arrived in Victoria are just "the tip of the iceberg," she said.

"The main problem is people who do not spay and neuter their pets," Fedorak said. The warm spring and long summer have contributed to the growing population.



Julia Fedorak said having pets spayed and neutered is one of the most effective ways of avoiding overcrowding in animal shelters. (CHEK)

A helping hand

The convoy departed Prince Albert, Sask. on Wednesday.

When the cats arrived, Foord said volunteers helped examine, feed, check chips, water and snuggle the animals for more than six hours.

The cats were restless after the 2000-kilometre trip from Saskatchewan, she said.

"It's been completely overwhelming and completely unexpected for us," Foord explained.

This marks the first time GVAC has undertaken a task of this magnitude. Despite the rush to process the cats and applications, Foord said the

collaboration has been a success.

One of the veterinarians who works with GVAC helped with the cat relocation by volunteering their time. As well, people have donated rabies vaccinations and flea treatments.

"It really is heartwarming," Foord said.

With files from CBC British Columbia

CBC

Radio-Canada

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Visitez Radio-Canada.ca

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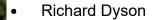
Leasehold scandal: ground rent that starts at £250, then rockets to ... £69 trillion

telegraph.co.uk



Newly built flats where the freehold has been sold on before development can entail 'impossibly onerous'

terms, solicitors have warned



18 November 2016 • 3:41pm

Buyers of new properties are being warned that innocuous-sounding "virtual freeholds" might conceal onerous terms which could hit the future value of their property - or make it unsellable.

In one real example relating to a block of flats in Islington, north London, experts have calculated that grounds rents starting

at £250 per year per flat would grow over the term of the lease to... £68,719,476,736,000.

In other words, £69 trillion: roughly 30 times Britain's current GDP.

How your ground rent starts at £250.... and grows to £69 trillion - Highcharts Cloud£trillionHow your ground rent starts at £250.... and grows to£69 trillionActual example of ground rent as contracted on newly-built flats in a north Londoncomplex2505001 0002 0004 0008 00016 00032 00064 000128 000256 000512 0001 024 0002 048 0004 096 0008 192 00016 384 00032 768 00065 536 000131 072 000262 144 000524 288 0001 048 576 0002 097 152 0004 194 304 0008 388 608 00016 777 216 00033 554 432 00067 108 864 000134 217 728 000268 435 456 000536 870 912 0001 073 741 824 0002 147 483 648 0004 294 967 296 0008 589 934 592 00017 179 869 184 00034 359 738 368 00068 719 476 736 000£250 ground rent doubling every 25 years02004006008001000025T50T75THighcharts

That final, inconceivable figure would only apply in the latter years of the block's 999 year lease.

Even so, it is being cited as an illustration of increasingly common, punitive freeholder terms which are "blighting" newbuild properties and storing up disasters for buyers.

In this case the leaseholders clubbed together to buy out the landlord. But lawyers warn that where the terms are so favourable to the freeholder, the cost of buying the freehold is high.

The most dangerous terms for leaseholders are ground rents which are contracted to double at certain intervals, as this triggers exponential increases.

In the case of the Islington block, rents starting at £250 per year were set to double every 25 years.

The Guardian recently reported on a Taylor Wimpey property for which a buyer paid £101,000 in 2010 but which is now unsellable - because ground rents are set to spiral to £8,000. The housebuilder said it did not own the freehold.

Louie Burns of Leasehold Solutions, which helps leaseholders buy freehold, said: "Developers tend to sell the freeholds before they start building. Professional ground rent investors are involved in the process and the terms that are devised can be complex - meaning buyers do not necessarily understand what they are getting in to."

He also said the issue was "hushed up" by many leaseholders, because they did not wish to draw attention to what is effectively a defect of the property.

"Once you realise you've fallen victim to these onerous terms, you tend not to talk about it - because it hits the value of your property," he said. "It's the biggest legitimate scam in Britain."

Sebastian O'Kelly, of the Leasehold Knowledge Partnership, a registered charity which aims to protect vulnerable leaseholders, condemned the term "virtual freeholds" as "marketing cobblers".

"Rather than talking nonsense about 'virtual freeholds', housebuilders should be providing brief resumes of the key lease terms," he said.

Veteran Tory MP Sir Peter Bottomley told the All Party Parliamentary Group on leasehold reform this week that these ground rents, while legitimate, were "clearly undesirable" and "sharp practice".

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Lost Train Depots of Los Angeles





Lost L.A. Logo

January 17, 2013



santafe_railway.jpg

The Moorish dome of the Santa Fe Railway's red-brick La Grande Station welcomed newcomers to Los Angeles from 1893 to 1939. Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library.

Before the Jet Age brought safe and comfortable air travel to the masses, most newcomers in Los Angeles arrived by rail. Train depots thus provided tourists' and emigrants' first introduction to Los Angeles,

helping shape their ideas about the city. The city's grandest passenger terminal, Union Station, survives today. But its historic predecessors, which welcomed millions to the city, have all vanished from the cityscape.

Share on TwitterSend EmailComment

Compared with those that followed, and especially to Union Station, Los Angeles' first passenger depot was a modest affair. In the days before tourism became the lifeblood of the region's economy, after all, there was little point in expending capital on an impressive structure or decorative embellishment.

Serving Phineas Banning's Los Angeles & San Pedro Railroad, the city's first station was a tiny wooden structure on the southwest corner of Commercial and Alameda streets. When it opened on October 26, 1869, freight was at least as important as passenger service to the railroad's operations. Accordingly, amenities were sparse. Chronicler Harris Newmark was not impressed:

Really, it was more of a freight-shed than anything else, without adequate passenger facilities; a small space at the North end contained a second story in which some of the clerks slept; and in a cramped little cage beneath, tickets were sold.

The Los Angeles & San Pedro's life as an independent railroad was brief; in 1873, the Southern Pacific acquired the 21-mile line, and for a brief time the Commercial Street depot served as the terminal for the Southern Pacific's overland route to Los Angeles.

In 1876, the Southern Pacific opened a new depot on the current site of Los Angeles State Historic Park (the Cornfield). Known as the River Station, the two-story depot offered separate "ladies' and gentlemen's reception and waiting rooms," the Los Angeles Star reported, and was "finished on the outside with redwood rustic, all material being used of the very best quality." The railroad later upgraded the facility with many more passenger amenities, including a hotel and restaurants.

Though the River Station welcomed many of those drawn by the land boom of the mid-1880s, its location came to be seen as less than ideal. It was surrounded by the Southern Pacific's freight yards and, as the city's Anglo population shifted south of the historic plaza into the new central city, it was situated far from many passengers' ultimate destinations. Later depots, beginning with the Southern Pacific's Arcade Station, would be located to the south.

In 1888, the Arcade Station opened at Fourth and Alameda. Built on the former site of William Wolfskill's pioneering orange groves, the depot was flanked by gardens and landscaping meant to showcase Southern California's salubrious climate. A fully-grown Washington fan palm, moved from a site nearby, stood outside the station's entrance, symbolically welcoming newcomers to a supposed subtropical paradise.

The depot itself was a massive, wooden Victorian structure reminiscent of European train stations. Five hundred feet long, the depot's rail shed featured skylights and an arched roof that soared 90 feet above the platforms below. Upon its opening, the Los Angeles Times praised the Arcade Station as "second to none on the Pacific Slope."

Less than 25 years later, though, the newspaper was describing the depot as "ancient" and "unsightly and inadequate" as it welcomed the arrival of a new Southern Pacific depot, which came to be known as Central Station. Designed by architects John Parkinson and George Bergstrom, it was located at Fifth and Central, directly next to the Arcade Station. Central Station was the city's most impressive depot to date. The white stuccoed building was an imposing edifice. Steel umbrella-style train sheds replaced the arched roof of the Arcade Station, which tended to trap soot and smoke. Inside, the station offered passengers an elegant waiting room with chandeliers, fine woodwork, and marble wainscoting.

Central Station opened to passengers on December 1, 1914. The Arcade Station, meanwhile, "passed into history unhonored and unsung," the Times noted. There was no public outcry as wreckers dismantled the old wooden building to make way for new outdoor platforms.

Several blocks away, at the corner of Santa Fe Avenue and Second, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad's La Grande Station had been welcoming tourists and overland emigrants since 1893.

The station's exotic design incorporated several architectural styles, but what stood out most was its hulking Moorish dome that, wrote the Times, was "a suggestion of the Orient." Like the Arcade Station, the La Grande station boasted about the region's climate with lush gardens planted with palms and other exotic species. And although, unlike most Santa Fe depots in the Southwest, it did not include a full-service Harvey House restaurant, a Harvey lunch counter did open inside the complex in 1900.

The La Grande depot was also notable for its red-brick construction, selected because it signaled the station's importance and because it followed a rash of fires that had destroyed wooden depots. Unfortunately, the station's engineers failed to consider whether masonry construction was well-

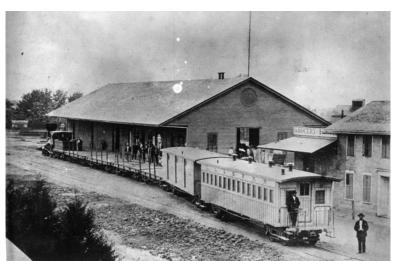
suited for earthquake country. When the 1933 Long Beach earthquake shook the region, the depot sustained serious damage. The Moorish dome, damaged beyond repair, was removed.

By then, plans were already well under way for a new, unified passenger terminal. The Union Pacific, having lost its depot on the east bank of the Los Angeles River to fire in 1924, had already moved its passenger operations to the Southern Pacific's Central Station. Now, the Santa Fe would join its two competitors at a grand new station, located on the site of Old Chinatown, where trains could more easily be separated from the city's bustling automobile and streetcar traffic.

By 1939, Chinatown had been razed and its residents displaced, and the Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal opened to a huge civic celebration. The two legacy depots, whose histories are richly documented in this thesis by Holly Charmain Kane, meanwhile, faded into obscurity. The La Grande station, which despite the earthquake damage continued to serve passengers until 1939, became a freight terminal. It was torn down in 1946.

Central Station suffered a similar fate. The Young Market Co. acquired the site, and the old depot was demolished to make way for a meat-packing plant. Though the station had welcomed countless newcomers to Los Angeles, the end came with little fanfare. On August 22, 1956, the Times reported the station's demise in a 92-word story on page B-2.

Commercial Street Depot — Los Angeles & San Pedro



The depot of the Los Angeles & San Pedro Railroad, the city's first, stood at Commercial and Alameda streets. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.



River Station — Southern Pacific

The Southern Pacific's River Station stood on the present-day site of the Los Angeles State Historic Park. In 1901, it was torn down and replaced by a new station, also called the River Station, across the street. Courtesy of the Title Insurance and Trust, and C.C. Pierce Photography Collection, USC Libraries.

Undated photo of the Southern Pacific's River Station. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Arcade Station — Southern Pacific

The Arcade Station's rail shed was five hundred feet long and ninety feet high. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library. Streetcars await passengers in front of the Arcade Station in this ca. 1900 postcard. Courtesy of the James Rojas Collection, Metro Transportation Library and Archive. Three trains could fit inside the Arcade Station's rail shed. Soot and smoke from the steam locomotives collected inside the building, annoying passengers. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

A fan palm





Undated photo of the Southern Pacific's River Station. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.



The Arcade Station's rail shed was five hundred feet long and ninety feet high. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.



Streetcars await passengers in front of the Arcade Station in this ca. 1900 postcard. Courtesy of the James Rojas Collection, Metro Transportation Library and Archive.

greeted tourists and emigrants when they arrived at the Southern Pacific's Arcade Station. Circa 1890 photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.

The Arcade Station palm tree was already mature when it was moved from San Pedro Street near Second in 1888. The tree was moved again in 1914 and stands today in front of the Los Angeles Coliseum in Exposition Park.

The Southern Pacific built its Arcade
Station on the Wolfskill ranch, where
William Wolfskill pioneered the growing of
oranges in Los Angeles. Courtesy of

the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.



Three trains could fit inside the Arcade Station's rail shed. Soot and smoke from the steam locomotives collected inside the building, annoying passengers. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

La Grande Station — Santa Fe Railroad

Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library.

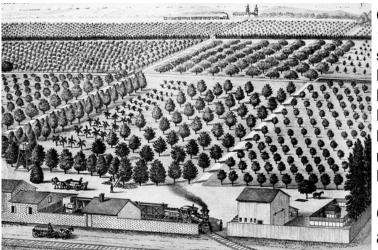
A burro-drawn covered wagon awaits Death Valley-bound passengers at the La Grande Station in 1930. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner

Collection, USC Libraries.

Outside La Grande Station, a garden of exotic plants welcomed newcomers to the supposedly subtropical climate of Southern California. Courtesy of the California Historical Society Collection, USC



A fan palm greeted tourists and emigrants when they arrived at the Southern Pacific's Arcade Station. Circa 1890 photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.



The Southern Pacific built its Arcade Station on the Wolfskill ranch, where William Wolfskill pioneered the growing of oranges in Los Angeles. Courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Libraries.

Circa 1904 postcard depicting La Grande Station. Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library.

La Grande Station's open-air concourse doubled as a waiting area. Circa 1937 photo courtesy of the Herman J. Schultheis Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Passengers wait for a train at the Santa Fe's La Grande Station, circa 1937.

Courtesy of the Herman J. Schultheis Collection, Los Angeles Public Library. 1924 aerial view of the Santa Fe's La Grande station. Courtesy of the Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Damaged beyond repair by the 1933 Long Beach quake, the station's Moorish dome was removed. Circa 1937 photo courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Central Station — Southern Pacific and Union Pacific railroads

Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives



Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library.



A burro-drawn covered wagon awaits Death Valleybound passengers at the La Grande Station in 1930. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.

and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library



Circa 1904 postcard depicting La Grande Station. Courtesy of the Werner

Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special An abandoned Central Station, circa

Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library.

Interior view of the Central Station lobby. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.

The Southern Pacific's white-stuccoed Central Station stood at the intersection of Central and Fifth.

A crowd gathers outside the Central Station. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries. In 1924, the Union Pacific moved its passenger operations to the Central Station. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries. An abandoned Central Station. circa



La Grande Station's open-air concourse doubled as a waiting area. Circa 1937 photo courtesy of the Herman J. Schultheis Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.



Passengers wait for a train at the Santa Fe's La Grande Station, circa 1937. Courtesy of the Herman J. Schultheis Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.



1924 aerial view of the Santa Fe's La Grande station.
Courtesy of the Security Pacific National Bank Collection,
Los Angeles Public Library.



Damaged beyond repair by the 1933 Long Beach quake, the station's Moorish dome was removed. Circa 1937 photo courtesy of the Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

replaced by a meat-packing plant. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.

Many of the archives who contributed the above images are members of L.A. as Subject, an association of more than 230 libraries, museums, official archives, cultural institutions, and private

1956. The historic depot was



Courtesy of the Werner Von Boltenstern Postcard Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loyola Marymount University Library

collectors. Hosted by the USC Libraries, L.A. as Subject is dedicated to preserving and telling the sometimes-hidden stories and histories of the Los Angeles region. Our posts here provide a view into the archives of individuals and institutions whose collections inform the great narrative—in all its complex facets—of Southern California.

A collaboration between the USC Libraries and KCETLink, Lost LA features the member collections of L.A. as Subject, a research alliance dedicated to



Interior view of the Central Station lobby. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.



A crowd gathers outside the Central Station. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.



In 1924, the Union Pacific moved its passenger operations to the Central Station. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.



An abandoned Central Station, circa 1956. The historic depot was replaced by a meat-packing plant. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Examiner Collection, USC Libraries.

preserving and telling the sometimes-hidden stories and histories of the Los Angeles region.

• Nathan Masters is host, producer, and managing editor of *Lost LA*, an original public television series from KCET and the USC Libraries. His writings focus on the evolution of Los Angeles' built and natural environments and have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Los*

Angeles Magazine, The Public Historian, Boat, and other fine publications – including an essay in LAtitudes: An Angeleno's Atlas (Heyday, 2015).

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Malawi man convicted over 'cleansing' sex ritual

АГР

November 18, 2016



Eric Aniva (right) was paid to have sex with adolescents to mark their passage to womanhood after their first menstruation (AFP Photo/Eldson Chagara)

Nsanje (Mozambique) (AFP) - A
Malawian man accused of sleeping with
more than 100 girls and women in a
series of traditional cleansing rituals was
on Friday convicted by a court of
"engaging in harmful practices".

Eric Aniva -- who has said he is infected with the HIV virus -- was prosecuted after publicly speaking about his role as a "hyena" in a BBC documentary.

Custom in some parts of southern Malawi demands that a man, known as a "hyena", is paid to have sex with bereaved widows to exorcise evil spirits and to prevent other deaths occurring.

At the request of a girl's parents, the "hyena" is also paid to have sex with adolescents to mark their passage to womanhood after their first menstruation.

The ritual, which many Malawians says is rarely practised today, is believed to train girls to become good wives and protect them from disease or misfortune that could fall on their families.

After an international outcry, President Peter Mutharika ordered Aniva's arrest in July.

In the first case of its kind, Aniva, 45, was found guilty on two counts by magistrate Innocent Nebi after a one-day trial in a packed courtroom in the district of Nsanje.

"It is clear... that the state has proved beyond reasonable doubt that the accused was engaging in harmful practices," the magistrate said.

"I find you guilty and convict you accordingly," he said, adding that sentencing would be on November 22.

He faces a maximum of five years in jail.

- High HIV infection -

The state produced six witnesses against Aniva, who pleaded not guilty.

The magistrate said the court had concluded that "sexual cleansing violates the dignity of widows".

State prosecutor Chiyembekezo Banda demanded a long prison sentence for Aniva, saying he was probably responsible for the spread of HIV.

Malawi is one of the worst affected countries in the world, with 27,000 deaths from AIDS-related illnesses and nine percent of the adult population infected with HIV.

Michael Goba Chipeta, Aniva's defence lawyer, told the court his client should not be jailed.

Chipeta appealed for Aniva to not be used as "a sacrificial lamb", saying "the publicity he has attracted is punishment enough".

Before being led by police to his cell, Aniva told AFP: "I am not worried about being convicted. I think I will be given a suspended sentence."

His second wife Sophia, who was in court, was in tears and declined to speak to the press.

Aniva is said to have slept with at least 104 women and girls, some as young as 12, in a ritual that lasts three days.

He said each family paid him a fee of between \$4 and \$7 (3.78-6.61 euros).

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The Telegraph A giant spitting cobra (unwed) Credit: REUTERS/WildlifeDirect/Handout



Adam Boult

18 November 2016 • 7:43pm

A firefighter from Malaysia has responded angrily to reports in the UK press claiming he had married his pet snake.

Several pictures of Abu Zarin Hussin, 31, were used to illustrate a story about a man from Thailand who, reports said, had married a 10ft long cobra he believed to be a reincarnation of his dead girlfriend.

The story was featured on the Daily Mail and Daily Mirror websites, alongside photos of Mr Hussin with a snake.

"The pictures are of me," he told Malaysia's Star newspaper. "They used my photos and started making up stories, saying that I married a snake.

"I just want to express my disappointment over the attitude of a handful of foreign journalists who acted in clear violation of journalistic ethics in publishing the news, especially since the pictures were clearly taken from my Facebook account."

Mr Hussin has been working with snakes since 2007 as part of his work with the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department.

"The snakes are with me so that I can observe their behaviour," he said. "Catching snakes [is] part of a fireman's duty. I am training other firemen how to handle and manage snakes. So that after they are caught, we can release them back into their natural habitat."

The BBC contacted Nick York of the Exclusivepix agency, which sold the story to Mirror Online, who said the original story about the man marrying a snake had been provided by a British journalist in Thailand.

"The story was checked according to the journalist and if the information is incorrect we can only report what the journalist believed the story to be after doing his own checks," he said.

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Man cheats recycling machine out of €44k with one bottle

thelocal.de

THE LOCAL

The Local



Man cheats recycling machine out of €44k with one bottle

of professional deception.

The Local · 17 Nov 2016, 15:52

Published: 17 Nov 2016 15:52

GMT+01:00

A Cologne drinks vendor modified a bottle-recycling machine to swindle tens of thousands of euros from the German recycling system, a court learned on Tuesday.

The man was then sentenced by a Cologne court on Wednesday to ten months in prison after he was convicted

The German bottle recycling system is simple enough. Place the bottle in the machine, press the button, take your receipt, and get a few cents back.

But the 37-year-old drinks salesman manipulated a bottle-recycling machine in the cellar of his drinks shop to earn a lot more than a bit of spare change, according to the Kölner Stadt Anzeiger.

Having installed a magnet sensor and a kind of wooden tunnel into the machine, the man was able to feed the bottle into the mechanism, receive the compensation, and retrieve the bottle without it being shredded.

The drinks vendor was therefore able to extract €44,362.75 from the machine by inserting the same bottle into the machine 177,451 times.

The defendant invested around €5,000 into his criminal machine. His lawyer stated that "it was a method by which one could earn good money with relatively little investment."

The judge described the feat as a "logistical master stroke", concluding that he must have "done nothing else every day other than attend to the machine."

It is not known how long it took the man to earn the final sum, but the process was evidently extremely time-consuming.

"I had a radio next to it because otherwise it was really boring," the defendant replied.

The scam is unlikely to be a one-off. The Deutsche Pfandsystem Gesellschaft, which is responsible for the machine distribution and payments across Germany, did not notice the scam until an undercover detective was given an anonymous tip-off.

The detective estimates that such scandals could be bringing about "damages into the millions [of euros]."

The defendant's lawyer stated her client offered a full confession, but added that he "did not invent the scam, but merely copied it."

Giving the defendant a ten month sentence, the judge spoke of the crime as an "audacious act to earn his money from such a scam."

The Local Europe GmbH Schwedter Strasse 227 10435 Berlin Germany

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Rob Waugh for Metro.co.ukWednesday 30 Nov 2016 3:59 pm



Authorities rescued 49 caged cats Picture Rex

A supposed 'animal lover' who said he was looking after stray cats in his house was actually butchering them – and selling them to restaurants as 'rabbits'.

When authorities moved in on the man's warehouse, they found scenes of horror – including decapitated animals, and two tonnes of cat meat.

They also rescued 49 cats from cages.

The man, named as Huang Fuping by local paper Chengdu Business Daily, claimed to be an animal lover, but killed the cats and sold them for £2.30 per kilo as 'rabbit'.



Picture Reuters

Chengdu Aizhijia Animal Rescue Centre said, 'After receiving information, relevant departments teamed up to enforce law on the cat slaughterhouse which had been running for 30 years.

Picture Reuters

'Volunteers from the Aizhijia assisted the relevant departments to close down the persistent and cruel cat slaughterhouse.'

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Man found innocent of molesting charges by claiming he was pickpocketing

rocketnews24.com

RocketNews24

Bringing you yesterday's news from Japan and Asia, today.



Suspect denies touching victim for sexual reasons because he was "actually" trying to rob someone else.

According to the defendant's testimony in Osaka District Court, he was riding a crowded train on the Osaka Loop Line at about four o'clock in the afternoon of 9 April, when he attempted to steal something from the bag of another passenger in front of him.

However, just as he reached out, the train began to shake, causing his hand to collide with

an adjacent woman, making contact around her midsection. She then reported him to the authorities, who charged the man with molesting.



However, during the trial on 15 November, Presiding Judge Arakane deemed that the man was innocent of molestation. He cited the reason for the ruling to be that the woman claimed in the police report that she was touched for 30 seconds, but during the trial, that had changed to three seconds.

Also, immediately after the touch occurred, the man apologized. Judge Arakane felt that the woman may have mistaken that for an admission of guilt, and was generally doubtful of her interpretation of the events that happened.

This is in spite of the prosecution's claims that, although the defendant had continuously denied the molestation, they say he only claimed to be pickpocketing suddenly during the trial. This is because they believe he, at some point, learnt it had a leaner sentence.

In this molestation case the prosecution was requesting a two-year prison sentence for violation of the nuisance prevention ordinance. On the other hand, a minor attempted theft conviction would likely result in a few months in prison or even simply a fine.

Readers of the verdict were surprised at how the law applied to these two crimes.

"Huh? What is this?"

"That guy just found a hell of a loophole."

"Can't anyone just say there were rubbing a woman looking for something to steal?"

"Seriously? Pickpocketing is a lighter crime than molesting?" "Looks like this guy will have a nice holiday dinner in jail before going free." "If the punishment for pickpocketing were heavier I would have believed him."

Whatever did happen on that afternoon, it is clear that the suspect was up to no good and preying on people either for their dignity or their property. The one thing we can learn from this is to pay careful attention to your sense of time. You never know when it will be used against you in a court of law.

Source: Sankei West via Alfalfalfa (Japanese)

Top Image: Wikipedia/W0746203-1

Insert Image: Wikipedia/J o

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Man who inherited house finds hidden gold bars and coins worth \$5 million

ottawasun.com

Postmedia Network

First posted: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 01:19 PM EST | Updated: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 01:35 PM EST



A man who inherited a house from a dead relative discovered he was living in a treasure trove worth nearly \$5 million.

According to the BBC, the man discovered thousands of gold bars and coins hidden when he began clearing out old furniture in the Normandy, France, home given to him by a relative.

"It was under the furniture, under piles of linen, in the bathroom... everywhere," a local auctioneer told AFP.

Certificates found in the home show the treasure was legally obtained in the 1950s and 60s, though the new millionaire, whose name and relation to the deceased have not been revealed, may have to pay back taxes on the gold.

The treasure has already been sold to buyers from around the world.

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Manhattan woman sues Zara after finding dead rat sewn into dress

BY Victoria Bekiempis nydailynews.com

BY Victoria Bekiempis NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Updated: Monday, November 14, 2016, 5:51 PM



Court papers included several black-and-white photos of the dress.

Court papers included several black-and-white photos of the dress.

A Manhattan woman's Zara dress came with an unwanted accessory — a dead rat sewn into the hem, a new lawsuit alleges.

Cailey Fiesel bought two dresses from the Spanish clothier's Greenwich, Conn. store last July, and hung them in the closet after her purchase.

Fiesel, 24, wore the black dress for the first time in August 2016 to her job.

"While at work, she started to notice a disturbingly pungent odor and was unable to identify the source," the Manhattan Supreme Court lawsuit charges. "Despite getting up from her desk and walking around, she was unable to escape this odor.

Fired lawyer sues Zara for \$40M in discrimination suit

"As the day went on, Ms. Fiesel started to notice what felt like a loose string from her dress rubbing against her leg," and "without giving it much thought she reached down with her hand to try and locate the piece of string that was rubbing against her."

Court papers included several black-and-white photos of the dress "conspicuously depicting the dead rodent with at least one of its appendages protruding."

"To her utter shock and disbelief, as she ran her hand over the hem of the dress she felt an unusual bulge and suddenly realized that it was not a string that was rubbing against her leg but was instead a leg rubbing against her leg. The leg of a dead rodent that is," court papers claim.

"Ms. Fiesel jumped out of her chair in shock, people surrounded her desk to see what the commotion was while Ms. Fiesel was paralyzed with fear, she then ran to remove the dress," the suit added. "After removing the dress she found that a dead rodent was sewn into the hem of the dress."

"It's disturbing," said Adam Deutsch, who's representing Fiesel. "It clearly comes from a lack of oversight in terms of what they're putting on their shelves."



(PHILIPPE HUGUEN/AFP/Getty Images)

Fiesel is seeking unspecified damages "in a sum that will fairly and adequately compensate her for the damages and injuries she has suffered."

In a statement to the Daily News, Zara said it's "aware of the suit, and we are investigating the matter further."

"Zara USA has stringent health and safety standards, and we are committed to ensuring that all of our products meet these rigorous requirements," a Zara spokesman also said.

It is unclear what species of rodent was allegedly in Fiesel's dress or how it got there.

"As a result of Zara's negligence in manufacturing and selling a dress to Ms. Fiesel with a dead rodent inside, Ms. Fiesel has sustained significant personal injuries and emotional distress," the suit says. "She formed a large rash that was diagnosed as a rodent born disease."

Zara, Fiesel claims, had "manufactured, distributed, delivered, supplied, inspected, and/or sold the dress, which was unfit for its intended purpose and unreasonably hazardous, causing personal injury to the plaintiff."

She also maintains the company "breached its duty to exercise reasonable care in designing, manufacturing, inspecting, distributing, delivering, supplying, inspecting, and/or selling its products by negligently releasing into the marketplace a product that was defective by containing disease causing rodents."

Fiesel is seeking unspecified damages "in a sum that will fairly and adequately compensate her for the damages and injuries she has suffered."

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Marilyn Monroe's 'Happy Birthday Mr. President' dress has sold for £3.9m

metro.co.uk

This site uses cookies. By continuing, your consent is assumed. Learn more Miranda Larbi for Metro.co.ukFriday 18 Nov 2016 12:44 pm



(Photo: KENA BETANCUR/AFP/Getty Images)

One of the most iconic dresses in history has been sold for \$4.8m (£3.9m).

The flesh-coloured gown which Marilyn Monroe wore to serenade JFK on his 45th birthday was the centerpiece in the largest collection of the actress' memorabilia to be auctioned.

The Jean Louis dress is covered in 2.500 hand-stitched crystals and according to

Julien's Auctions, it was so tight that the actress had to be sewn into it moments before heading out on stage at Madison Square Garden in 1962.

Apparently, the dress was supposed to give the illusion of being naked, making people think they could see something when they couldn't.



(Picture: Dan Wonderly/Julien's Auctions/PA Wire)

The winning bidder was Ripley's Believe It or Not! – an entertainment company which specialises in collecting historically significant artifacts.

'In the 20th century, I cannot think of one single item that tells the story of the 1960s as well as this dress,' said Edward Meyer, Ripley's vice-president.

The dress is so popular, that even a sketch of it by fashion designer Bob Mackie was snapped up for £8,000 - while a pair of Monroe's Ferragamo shoes were sold for £27,400.

(Picture: AFP PHOTO / Frederic J. BROWNFREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/Getty Images)

'Marilyn Monroe singing "Happy Birthday Mr. President" is certainly one of the most famous impromptu performances in American history,' said Darren Julien, president and CEO of Julien's Auctions.

He said that the sale had been 'one of the most important moments in our history as a company'.

'Marilyn Monroe singing "Happy Birthday Mr President" is certainly one of the most famous impromptu performances in American history.



The rendition has lived on for decades as one of the most remarkable events in her career.'



(Photo by Yale Joel/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images)

Monroe died form an overdose later that year in August 1962.

Her dress sold for well above the pre-sale estimates of £2.4million, and even went for more than the iconic white dress she wore on the infamous windy grate in 'The Seven Year Itch'.

Many of pieces of memorabilia currently on sale come from Monroe's acting coach Lee

Strasberg, who died in 1982.



Other items on offer include the black dress she wore for the 1959 film Some Like It hot, documents, designer clothes and letters.

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The Telegraph Danniel Images

Danniel is 6ft 4in tallCredit: David Johnson / Barcroft Images



Adam Boult

23 November 2016 • 1:44pm

This, at the risk of stating the obvious, is a very, very large cow.

His name is Danniel, and he lives on a farm in the wonderfully-named town of Eureka in California, owned by one Ken Farley.

Mr Farley believes Danniel could be the tallest cow in the world, and is having him

measured in the hope of official verification from Guinness World records.



Danniel stops fighting gravity for a moment.

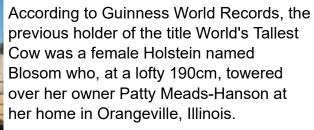
Danniel stops fighting gravity for a moment. Credit: David Johnson / Barcroft Images

The Holstein steer is a whoming 6 foot 4

The Holstein steer is a whopping 6 foot 4 inches high, and weighs in at 2300 pounds.

Each day Mr Farley keeps Danniel fed with 100 pounds of hay and 15 pounds of grain. In each 24 hours he guzzles 100 gallons of water, and produces 150 pounds of cow pats.

Holy cow.



Blosom died in 2015 after suffering an irreparable leg injury. Following her death Guinness World Records Editor-in Chief Craig Glenday, said: "We hold our tallest animals at Guinness World Records in an

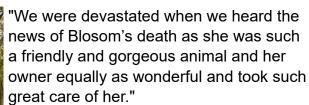


Danniel

extremely high regard due to their uniqueness and rarity in finding.



Blosom



Prior to Blosom, the record for tallest cow was held by a 6 ft 2 in Holstein-Durham cross named Mount Katahdin, who died in a barn fire in 1923.

The world's shortest cow is Manikyam from India, who comes in at 61.1 cm from hoof to withers.





Manikyam

Credit: David Johnson / Barcroft Images

'Sorry Toronto,' says Montreal tourism campaign

2016/12/06 cbc.ca

Montreal tourism campaign says 'sorry' to Toronto

Campaign apologizes in advance for noise from city's upcoming 375th birthday celebrations in 2017

Kate McGillivray · CBC News December 6, 2016



Torontonians looking up this morning have been met with a confusing sight: a plane with a "Sorry Toronto" banner flying over the city.

In a bout of wishful thinking, some hoped that it was Toronto's public transit service apologizing for a delay-ridden morning commute.

Turns out, it's part of a new campaign from Tourism Montreal

called *Sorry*, apologizing to Toronto in advance for all the noise the city is expected to make during Montreal's 375th birthday celebrations, which run through 2017.

Along with the banner, a video was released of Montrealers knocking on doors in Toronto and handing out tickets for free trips to Montreal.

Montreal's 375th birthday is set to be feted with a wide array of projects and events, such as a new downtown skating rink and a light installation added to the Jacques Cartier Bridge. The city has set aside \$329 million for capital works projects for the anniversary.

If you thought Toronto was confused, just wait: the "sorry" campaign will visit New York in 2017.

CBC

Radio-Canada

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Visitez Radio-Canada.ca

Mum claims she is haunted after snapping orphaned GHOST GIRL who 'wanted to be her friend'

express.co.uk



Mum claims she is haunted after snapping orphaned GHOST GIRL who 'wanted to be her friend'

A MOTHER claims she is still

haunted by the spooky image of an orphaned ghost girl she unwittingly photographed three years ago - because the ghoul wanted to be her FRIEND.

PUBLISHED: 11:30, Mon, Dec 5, 2016



Hannah Butler, 24, snapped what appears to be a dark-haired youngster dressed in white huddled by a tree during an organised ghost walk around Hessle Foreshore woods in East Riding, Yorks, in 2013.

And the spooked mother-of-one admits she is still fearful of the girl - who she says regularly appears in her thoughts and dreams - despite now living hundreds of miles away in Maidstone, Kent.

Ms Butler, who is mum to 15-month-old daughter Emma, said she still feels pangs of guilt for running away from the ghost girl - who she now believes may have wanted to be her friend.

Ms Butler, who is currently looking for work, said: "My friend Georgina wanted to do this ghost walk, so I ended up going a long for a laugh.

"Our guide showed us this tree, and told us that some people had seen the ghost of a little orphan girl there who is looking out to sea waiting for her daddy.

"I just snapped away at the tree, I must have taken about ten photos. I was wandering around, looking through them, and then I saw it.

"I thought I had just imagined her. It wasn't on any of the other photos. Then I started freaking out. I was so shocked.

"I showed Georgina and she showed the rest of the group. Of about 15 people, at least ten were convinced too and were freaked out.

"Some people thought I was a mole because it was an organised walk, but I had been as sceptical as some of them.

"I started crying and had to leave. I stayed over at my friend's for a few days after that because I was so scared."



Her photography, taken at about midnight, shows what appears to be the figure of a forlorn young girl aged five or six.

And Hessle Foreshore woods overlook the Humber River, lending weight to the tale of an orphan child looking out to sea for her lost father.

Ms Butler said: "This will sound mad but I actually went back in the daylight the next week with my friend and the guide to the same place.

"We made our own 'yes' and 'no' board, and the guide asked out loud if the girl wanted to be my friend. The answer was yes.

"I suddenly felt so guilty. It sounds strange, but if it was her then she showed herself to me for a reason. Why me? And I just ran away."

Ms Butler said since then the mysterious orphan girl has appeared regularly in her dreams - and said the snap has forced her to change her outlook on whether ghosts exist forever.

And the mysterious image even left previously-sceptical partner of three years Chris Billings, 25, totally baffled.

Ms Butler said many friends and some social media users now also believe in ghouls after viewing her creepy photo online.

She said: "It sounds silly, but after that night I have had dreams about the girl. She's been on my mind a lot.

"I think of her often, and I still dream about her. I don't think she will ever leave me.

"I felt guilty for leaving Hull and moving away. But then I'm 300 miles away now and feel like she could be anywhere around me.

"If there was a dark room, I would always be scared that she was there in the corner, and I still feel like that at times.

"It's still like that now, even though I live hundreds of miles away from there.

"Chris is the most sceptical person, but even when he looks at the picture he can't find an explanation. There was just no explanation. I don't know what to believe any more.

"And then I look at the picture and it's definitely a girl. I've tried to find an explanation but I can't."

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An Insane Explorer.



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, November 26, 2016

An Insane Explorer.

Little Murders



On July 8, 1879, the U.S.S. *Jeanette* left San Francisco bound for the Bering Strait. Its mission, funded by James Gordon Bennett, Jr., publisher of the *New York Herald*, was to make the United States the first nation to reach the North Pole, on the theory that a warm Pacific current would provide a water route. After nearly two years sailing through ice-bound waters, the *Jeanette* was "nipped" in the ice on June 12, 1881 and sank the following day. The crew set off on foot, hoping to reach the coast of Siberia before winter set in. They struggled for 91 days, living on seal, walrus, polar bear, and sea birds, and covered nearly one thousand miles. Only thirteen of the original crew of thirty-three survived.

Among the survivors of the *Jeanette* expedition was James R. Bartlett, who, in 1892, was living in San Francisco with his wife and their niece. Mentally, Bartlett never recovered from his arctic hardship; and had previously been confined in an insane asylum.

Around 1:30, the morning of October 30, 1892, Bartlett went into his house and told his wife he was going to kill her. He drew his revolver and shot his wife in the shoulder. As she ran screaming from the room, their young niece, Lottie Carpenter, came in and tried to intercede. Bartlett shot her in the head and she died moments later. He then went to a back room and shot himself in the head.

The newspapers all agreed that the tragedy was a direct result of hardships Bartlett suffered as a crewman of the ill-fated *Jeanette* expedition. The *Oregonian* questioned the value of such ventures, "Neither science, humanity nor common sense warrants a man in putting so severe strain upon his physical and mental powers as to render his crippled existence a misfortune to himself and a constant menace to those about him. The *Jeannette* expedition was one of the most costly in life, hardship and money that has ever been sent out in quest of an "open Polar Sea," while its profits are so meager that science takes no note of them."

Sources:

"[San Francisco; Miss Lottie Carpenter; James R.," Oregonian, November 1, 1892.

National Geographic: The Hair-Raising Tale of the U.S.S. Jeannette's Ill-Fated 1879 Polar Voyage.

"James R. Bartlett Dead," Daily Register-Gazette, October 26, 1893.

USNI News: The Jeannette Expedition.

"News in Brief.," Huntsville Gazette, November 5, 1892.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

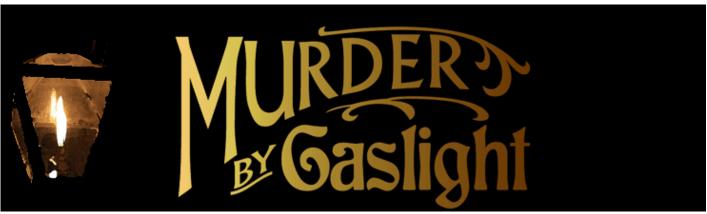
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[&]quot;An Insane Explorer.," Plain Dealer, October 31, 1892.

[&]quot;An Insane Murderer," San Diego Union, October 31, 1892.

[&]quot;Crazed By His Arctic Sufferings.," New York Tribune, October 31, 1892.

Killed in a Saloon. murderbygaslight.com



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, November 19, 2016

(From Augusta Chronical, January 2, 1888)

KILLED IN A SALOON.

Political Partions Meet in New Orloans and Patai Pight Results.

(Sy Talloader Pro Trac RESSECTION.)

Six Wolkhars. Li. Jan. 1-Soon after one of close this more large of the property of the control of the contr

Killed in a Saloon.

Political Factions Meet in New Orleans and a Fatal Fight Results.

New Orleans, LA, Jan. 1 – Soon after one o'clock this morning a shooting affray took place in Johnson's saloon, 21 Charles street, in which city administrators, Patrice Mealey, was mortally wounded, Mike Walsh dangerously, and Daniel Markey painfully. The last named received a shot in the mouth. All were taken to Charity Hospital, where Commissioner Mealey died at 2:10 o'clock this afternoon. Walsh remains in a comatose condition. It appears that Commissioner Mealey and a party of political friends, supporters of Nicholl's, went late to the saloon for the purpose of getting drinks. While they were there half a dozen McEnery men, including Special Officers Louis Clare and John Gibson, came in. As to the origin of the trouble statements conflict materially, there being so many persons present. Each aide, however, charges the other with being the aggressors. Be that as it may, there was shouting for Nicholls and for McEnery. Mealy and Clare met together, and then the shooting began.

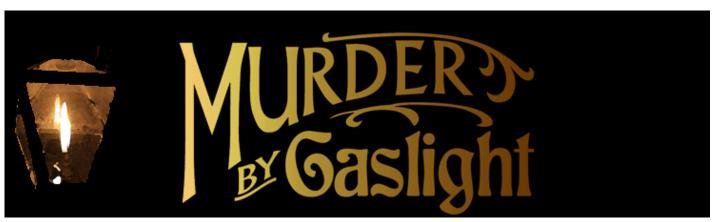
Twelve or fifteen shots were fired, showing that several weapons must have been used. All accounts agree in one particular, that Louis Clare and John Gibson began the shooting. Mealy declared that he had been shot by Clare. Both Clare and Gibson have been locked up and charges of murder will be made against them.

"Killed in a Saloon." Augusta Chronical January 2, 1888.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

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The Veiled Murderess



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, January 14, 2012

The Veiled Murderess



In 1854, a woman calling herself Henrietta Robinson stood trial in Troy, New York, for poisoning a neighbor and his sister-in-law. Despite the judge's admonitions, she sat through the trial with her face covered by a black veil, hiding her appearance from the throngs of spectators who had come to watch. Everything about the defendant was a mystery—her motive for murder, her behavior before and after the crime, and even her true identity. It was well known that "Henrietta Robinson" was an assumed name, but who she really was has never been determined.

Date: May 25, 1853

Troy, New York

Location: Troy, New York

Victims: Timothy Lanagan & Catherine Lubee

Cause of Death: Poisoning

Accused: Henrietta Robinson

Synopsis:

In the early 1850s, Henrietta Robinson was a well-known figure in Troy, New York. She was, at first glance, a beautiful, refined, young woman of means, but those who had close encounters with her knew Henrietta to be wild and unpredictable with an unfounded fear of persecution. She was quick to take offense, and travelled heavily armed, pulling her revolver at the slightest hint of insult. According to biographer, David Wilson, writing in 1855:

She fancied that a gentleman who resided near her, in addition to his active participation in the general persecution that raged against her, had stopped he navigation of the Hudson River. She was found groping in the dark through the halls of public buildings, inquiring for the police office, and demanding of the authorities, assistance to protect her house, which, all the time, had remained unmolested and undisturbed. She wandered about the city at night, armed with her revolver, and presented it at the breast of one who had the curiosity to observe her movements. She sallied out at a very early hour in the morning clad only in her night garments, and arousing an acquaintance from sleep, requested the loan of a dress, with the singular apology that she had forgotten her outward apparel on leaving home.

Through all of these episodes she kept her background a secret, or rather, told stories so contradictory that none could be believed. Sometimes her father was a lord who had driven her from his castle, sometimes she attributed her misfortunes to a wicked step-mother, sometimes she was the daughter of a humble Irishman in Vermont. But always, she was the target of a terrible conspiracy, and lived in constant fear of its agents.



In 1853, Henrietta Robinson was living in cottage with a servant girl and an elderly gardener. On the corner opposite her cottage was a grocery store run by a man named Timothy Lanagan. He and his family lived in an apartment connected to the store. The store sold alcohol and had a bar where the locals would congregate for music and dancing.

Henrietta would send the gardener or the servant girl to Lanagan's store for provisions. Before long these provisions included beer and sometimes brandy. These orders became so frequent that people in the neighborhood believed she must have been in a constant state of inebriation. Eventually she would come out herself, and join the rowdies drinking at the bar in Lanagan's store. But the alcohol did not improve her disposition and she would often be provoked by some real or imagined insult, to draw her revolver. More than once, she had to be forcibly ejected from the building.

On the morning of May 25, 1853, Henrietta purchased a quart of beer form Lanagan's store. Two hours later she went back and was drinking at the bar until she got into a heated argument with one of the patrons and Mrs. Lanagan requested that she leave. At one o'clock she returned again and

found Mr. and Mrs. Lanagan having dinner with Catherine Lubee, a sister-in-law of Mr. Lanagan who had been staying with them. They invited Henrietta to join them.

After dinner, Henrietta offered to repay their kindness by treating them to beer on her account. Mrs. Lanagan declined, but Mr. Lanagan and Miss Lubee agreed and he went to get the beer. Henrietta also requested some sugar which, she said, would make the beer taste better. There wasn't enough beer to fill all the tumblers so Mr. Lanagan went for more. When he returned he found that Henrietta had added the sugar to their glasses. At this point Henrietta decided that she did not want any beer and left the store. Two hours later Timothy Lanagan and Catherine Lubee were seized with a mortal sickness.

They had been poisoned with arsenic. There was little doubt as to who was responsible, Mrs. Lanagan told the police what had happened, a local druggist told them he had recently sold some arsenic to Henrietta, and arsenic was found in Henrietta's cottage. When Lanagan and Lubee died, Henrietta Robinson was arrested for their murders.

Through a series of delays and postponements, Henrietta Robinson was not officially indicted until February 1854, nine months after the murder. Her trial did not commence until May. The delays left the people of Troy with the impression that powerful forces were at work behind the scenes to protect her. In July Henrietta tried to commit suicide by drinking vitriol. It was unknown how she obtained the poison, but some speculated that the same mysterious forces would prefer her death in prison to a public hearing.

As the story of Henrietta Robinson spread throughout the United States and Canada, articles appeared in various newspapers claiming to identify her. One said she was actually a Mrs. Campbell, who kept a drinking house in the suburbs of Quebec and had run away with a cab-driver. A Troy paper claimed she was the daughter of a Dr. Robinson of Montreal, who had died nine years before in a lunatic asylum. A newspaper in Albany claimed she was the daughter of an Irish gentleman of rank who had been disinherited for marrying the son of her father's steward.

The most interesting story of Miss Robinson's history began as a rumor circulating in Troy. Someone who had attended the Troy Female Seminary identified her as a classmate named Emma Wood, daughter of William F. Wood, a prominent citizen of Quebec. When the story was printed by the Troy Times, Mr. Wood sued the paper for libel. The Troy Daily Whig received a card from the Wood family, categorically denying that Henrietta Robinson was their daughter. Though four of Mr. Wood's five daughters had attended the Troy Female Academy, all had since married and were living in England, Ireland and Scotland.

Trial: May 22, 1854

The case finally came to trial nearly a year after the murder. Henrietta Robinson was well represented by attorneys who used Henrietta's history of erratic behavior and lack of motive in the double murder to try to prove her innocence by reason of insanity. The prosecution argued that drunkenness is not insanity and not a defense against murder. To someone in Henrietta's condition being thrown out of the bar was motive enough.

But the defendant herself grabbed all the attention at the trial by appearing every day with her face covered by a black veil. When witnesses were called to identify her, she would reluctantly lift the veil for the witness's eyes only. On the third day of the trial, the judge told Henrietta to remove the veil

or face charges of contempt of court. Henrietta responded, through her attorneys, that she would rather submit to whatever punishment required than to remove the veil. The judge relented and Henrietta Robinson wore the veil for the rest of the trial.

In the end the jury agreed that, in spite of her antics, Henrietta Robinson was not insane and was responsible for her actions. They found her guilty of first degree murder. Upon the reading of the verdict Henrietta jumped up and shouted:

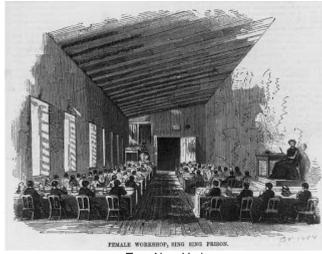
"Shame on you judge! Shame on you! There is corruption here! There is corruption in the court!"

Verdict: Guilty of first degree murder

Aftermath:

Appeals kept the case open for another year, but the defense attorneys' request for a new trial was denied. On June 14, 1855 Henrietta Robinson was brought into court and, at the judge's request, she raised her veil as the sentence was read. She was sentenced to hang on the third of August.

As the execution date approached, the governor of New York received appeals from citizens throughout the state to spare Henrietta's life. Whether at their urging, or due to the influence of the unseen forces that seemed to protect Henrietta, the governor agreed to commute her sentence to life in prison. The news did not please Henrietta; she had made peace with God and was fully prepared to die.



Troy, New York

Sometime before the sentencing, Henrietta had been recognized again, this time as Charlotte Wood, another of Mr. Wood's daughters who had attended the Troy Female Seminary. Many accepted this as her true identity, but Miss Robinson never confirmed it.

Henrietta Robinson spent eighteen years in Sing Sing prison then was transferred to the prison in Auburn, New York. In 1890 she was transferred again to the Mateawan Hospital for the Criminally Insane where she spent the last fifteen years of her life. Hospital records indicated she was seventy-eight years old at her last birthday, but she said she was eighty-nine. Though she was urged to reveal her identity on her

deathbed, the veiled murderess took the secret to her grave.

Books:

Wilson, D. Henrietta Robinson. New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855.

Newspaper:

"The 'Veiled Murderess'; Her Life and History." *The New York Times* 31 July 1855. "Veiled Murderess Dies with 50 Years' Secret." *The New York Times* 15 May 1905. Posted by Robert Wilhelm

2 comments:

Caleb21 says:

To November 17, 2012 at 3:27 AM

Very interesting/original story! I love reading these posts. I do wonder if anyone has conducted research on this so-called Henrietta Robinson in modern times? While I understand that it was more or less accepted that she was actually one of the daughters of a Dr. Wood of Quebec, it would be interesting if any material can be found to follow up and perhaps confirm or deny that claim?

pvm777 says:

September 12, 2015 at 12:40 AM

Yes, I wish...

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Museum to auction wax figures of presidents, first ladies

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 3, 2016

 P_{Pres} GETTYSBURG, Pa. (AP) — A Gettysburg wax museum that features the likeness of every U.S. president and first lady has closed and the figures are up for auction.

The Hall of Presidents and First Ladies Museum in Gettysburg had been in business for about 60 years. Owners say more than 1 million people had visited the museum since 1957.

The collection features life-sized figures of the presidents and one-third-scale figures of the first ladies in reproduction inaugural gowns.

The museum is located near the retirement home of President Dwight Eisenhower. The home is now a national historic site.

The auction of the wax figures is scheduled for Jan. 14 at the 1863 Inn of Gettysburg.

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AFPNovember 18, 2016

Tun Naing (left) arrives at a Yangon court compound on November 18, 2016 (AFP Photo/Romeo Gacad)

Yangon (AFP) - A self-proclaimed sorcerer who allegedly beat three children to death in an exorcism ritual appeared in a Yangon court on Friday, telling reporters he was possessed by a "dark spirit" at the time of the killings.

Police say the black magic practitioner, Tun Naing, punched and kicked two toddlers and an eight-month-old baby to death last month in a tiny village outside Myanmar's commercial capital.

According to witnesses he told villagers the children were possessed by evil sprits and then killed them over two days as their families watched.

Speaking as police led him away from the court hearing, Tun Naing told reporters he had been possessed when he attacked the children.

"I did it because I lost control of my mind at that time as the dark spirit took over me," he said.

The uncle of the dead boy, also named Tun Naing, said the villagers lost their senses after he fed them "blessed" water and made them stand in a circle as he recited incantations.

"Because of what he did everyone was out of their mind," he told AFP reporters who visited him in Twante, south of Yangon several days after the killings.

A police report on the incident said the bodies of the children -- a three-year-old boy, two-year-old girl and a baby -- showed evidence of being punched, kicked and stamped on.

Hospital workers alerted authorities after the father of another little girl who had been beaten brought her to hospital covered in bruises.

While the majority of people in Myanmar are Buddhist, many also believe in spirits, astrology and "yadaya" -- magic used to ward off evil or misfortune.

Former military ruler Ne Win was famously superstitious and caused economic chaos in the late 1980s when he changed the denominations of the currency to add up to his lucky number nine.

Despite the onslaught of smartphones, Western brands and luxury hotels that have arrived since the junta ceded power in 2011, many people still consult fortune tellers and mystics for guidance.

'Miracle' as statue of Virgin Mary cries blood in bizarre church phenomenon

By Keyan Milanian 22:43, 17 NOV 2016 Updated 22:43, 17 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

A witness has claimed blood poured from the statue's eyes as he watched and, so far, there has been no reasonable explanation



A man claims to have watched in horror as blood poured from the eyes of a statue of the Virgin Mary.

A Telemundo news report featuring the small figurine showed the woman's face caked in what appears to be dry blood.

The man, who has not been identified, told the programme he was there when blood poured down the figure's cheeks.

And images taken by the news channel showed the brown haired likeness, wearing a white shawl and crown, with blood caked across its face.

It appears the blood may have come from the figurines glass-like brown eyes.



Virgin Mary cries blood

It is unclear where the incident, which took place last year, occurred although the church is believed to be somewhere in south America.

In August, worshippers at a rural church were stunned to see another statue of the Virgin Mary also weep blood as they prayed.

The congregation have declared the incident a miracle at the remote venue in in the Manuripi-Heath Amazonian Wildlife National Reserve in the Pando Department in Bolivia.

Local priest Jose Luis Mamani has announced that the church's statue of Christ's mother is bleeding from its eyes and hands.

Samples of the red substance have been taken to medics at the local hospital to find out if it is human blood.

A photograph taken by one worshipper shows red stains running down the statue's left cheek and through her fingers, clasped in prayer.



Virgin Mary cries blood

Just three months ago, hundreds of pilgrims flocked to a small town in Colombia to see a statue of the Virgin Mary which had cried a single tear of blood.

One worshipper Ana Cristina Jimenez said: "I saw that the Virgin had a tear of blood. I was surprised. I felt joyful, sad... everything!"

It remains to be seen whether or not the Vatican will endorse the weeping statue as a miracle.

"Only a very small number of similar others authorities as valid miracles, with

occurrences have been accepted by the Church's highest authorities as valid miracles, with numerous others proven to be hoaxes.

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Mystery over Dutch WW2 shipwrecks vanished from Java Sea bed - BBC News

bbc.com



16 November 2016 From the section Asia



HNLMS De Ruyter with 345 men on board was the flagship of Dutch Rear-Admiral Karel Doorman

Image copyrightNetherlands Institute of Military History

Three Dutch World War Two ships considered war graves have vanished from the bottom of the Java Sea, the Dutch defence ministry says.

All three were sunk by the Japanese during the Battle of the Java Sea in 1942, and their wrecks were discovered by divers in 2002.

A report in the Guardian says three British ships have disappeared as well.

The British government says it is "distressed" by the reports and is

investigating.

A new expedition to mark next year's 75th anniversary of the battle found the wrecks missing.

The Guardian says it has seen 3D images, showing large holes in the seabed where HMS Exeter, HMS Encounter, the destroyer HMS Electra, as well as a US submarine, used to be.

Experts say salvaging the wrecks would have been a huge operation.

The Dutch defence ministry is to investigate the mysterious disappearance.

In a statement, it said that two of its ships had completely gone, with sonar images only showing imprints, while large parts of a third ship, a destroyer, were missing.

"The desecration of a war grave is a serious offence," the ministry said.

The UK's Ministry of Defence confirmed that it had contacted the Indonesian authorities.

An MOD spokesperson said, "Many lives were lost during this battle and we would expect that these sites are respected and left undisturbed without the express consent of the United Kingdom."

Deep sea salvage: How to recover lost treasures of the deep

Theo Doorman, 82, son of legendary Rear Admiral Karel Doorman, who led the battle, was on the expedition which hoped to film the wrecks two weeks ago.

He said he could not believe his eyes when the sonar images came in, showing only a groove where his father's ship had been.

"I was sad," he said.

"Not angry. That doesn't get you anywhere. But sad. For centuries is was a custom not to disturb sailors' graves. But it did happen here."

The Battle of the Java Sea



Map of Indonesia, Java, marking where Java Sea battle took place

- 27 February 1942
- Allied action to stop Japanese Navy
- Dutch, British, Australian, US forces ships involved
- Five cruisers and nine destroyers involved, Led by Rear-Admiral Karel Doorman
- Only two ships remained
- Vanished ships are HNLMS De Ruyter, HNLMS Java, and HNLMS Kortenaer
- Defeat led to the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia)

The seas around Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are a graveyard for hundreds of ships and submarines sunk during the war.

Illegal salvaging of the wrecks for steel, aluminium and brass has become commonplace.

But the three missing wrecks were located 100km (60 miles) off the coast of Indonesia, at a depth of 70m. Salvage operators say it would not be easy to lift them.

"It is almost impossible to salvage this," Paul Koole of the salvage firm Mammoet told the Algemeen Dagblad. "It is far too deep."

Experts say the operation would have needed large cranes for long periods of time and would be unlikely to have gone unnoticed.

The Indonesian Navy, when contacted by the BBC, said they were unaware of the disappearance but said they would investigate.

"To say that the wreckage had gone suddenly, doesn't make sense," Navy spokesman Colonel Gig Sipasulta said. "It is underwater activities that can take months even years."

The Dutch authorities have also notified the other countries that formed part of the international expedition: the UK, Australia and the US.

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Image copyright Netherlands Institute of Military History

No nukes here! Canadian navy says B.C. diver's find not a bomb

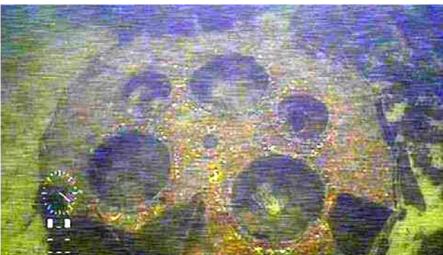
cbc.ca

CBC cbc masthead logo

A diver thought he had found a bomb lost by the U.S. Air Force in 1950 off B.C.'s North Coast

By Roshini Nair, CBC News Posted: Nov 25, 2016 3:23 PM PT Last Updated:

Nov 25, 2016 3:57 PM PT



The Royal Canadian Navy deployed a remotely operated vehicle to investigate the object off the North Coast of B.C. It turned out to be a large piece of industrial equipment and not part of a nuclear bomb as originally speculated. (Royal Canadian Navy)

Not a bomb: Navy determines unidentified object off Banks Island is industrial equipment, not lost nuke

The Royal Canadian Navy confirmed today that a mysterious object found off the coast of B.C.'s North Coast is not a bomb or a lost nuclear weapon.

The navy was deployed at the request of RCMP to investigate the area near Haida Gwaii after diver Sean Smyrichinsky found a suspicious object during a diving trip near Banks Island.



Banks Island is in the Hecate Strait, approximately 110 kilometres south of Prince Rupert. (Google Maps)

In a statement, the navy said the object is "a metal part of a larger machine assembly and appears to be a piece of industrial equipment."

Many had speculated the object was a lost Cold War nuclear weapon associated with a Convair B-36B, a U.S. Air Force bomber that crashed in northern B.C. in 1950.

Smyrichinsky accompanied navy personnel on HMCS Yellowknife to show them exactly where he had found the object.

"We dropped anchor about 1,000 feet from where I found this object, and the people were professional and kind of excited at the prospect of finding a bomb or UFO," he said.

Specialized bomb crews and a remotely operated vehicle investigated the area and sent data to the military base in Esquimalt, on Vancouver Island, to identify the object.

"They didn't allow any divers in the water and it was only done with robots. You can feel safe to swim in our oceans again. It is not a bomb," Smyrichinsky said of the discovery.

A 'super fun' adventure

Since the navy has finished its investigation, Smyrichinsky said he's had some time to reflect on what the past few weeks have been like.

"Super fun! The whole thing from beginning to end has been pretty overwhelming. Lots of attention worldwide with all of the TV and radio interviews and news things," he said.

Smyrichinsky has even received admiring letters, including one from a Grade 11 student from Tennessee.

"He had to write a letter to somebody he admires who is not famous, and he picked me because ... I didn't ask for a reward and I contacted the proper authorities."

Smyrichinsky said if he ever finds anything else during one of his dives, he'll be sure to report it.

With files from Daybreak North

CBC

Radio-Canada

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Visitez Radio-Canada.ca

New York thief grabs pot of gold off armored truck: police

yahoo.com

REUTERS ReutersNovember 30, 2016

NEW YORK (Reuters) - New York police are searching for a green-clad man who swiped an 86-pound (39 kg) pail of gold flakes off an armored truck two months ago and disappeared with the estimated \$1.6 million in treasure.

The city's police department late Tuesday released photos and video of the suspect, who was lingering near the truck on the afternoon of Sept. 29 and took advantage of a moment of distraction by its security guards to snatch the five-gallon (19-liter) bucket.

The video shows him walking away with some difficulty, likely due to the weight of the bucket.

The theft happened on a busy stretch of 48th Street in the borough of Manhattan, near the Rockefeller Center office and shopping complex, police said.

Police, who said they believe the man has since fled to Florida, described him as 50 to 60 years old, Hispanic and wearing a black vest and green shirt.

(Reporting by David Ingram; editing by Scott Malone, G Crosse)

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Non-smoker complains over use of image on cigarette box

thelocal.es

THE LOCAL es

The Local



Non-smoker complains over use of image on cigarette box

Fiona Govan · 15 Nov 2016, 10:52

Published: 15 Nov 2016 10:52

GMT+01:00

A man from Galicia is taking legal action against hospital authorities after discovering that a photograph taken of him during an operation was appearing as a warning on cigarette packets.

The 54-year-old resident of Boiro in the northwestern region of Galicia

recognized himself in a photograph on a tobacco packet above the warning: "Smoking can cause embolisms and disability".

He believes the photograph of himself unconscious and wearing breathing apparatus was taken while he was undergoing surgery at the Santiago de Compostela hospital during April last year.

The man, identified only by the initials FJTA, went to the Guardia Civil last week to file a complaint against hospital authorities.

He told La Voz de Galicia that several neighbours had recognized him on the cigarette packets, an alarming fact as his medical condition had absolutely nothing to do with smoking.

"I am in that hospital bed not because of the consequences of smoking but because of back problems." He explained that he had a titanium plate fitted in his spine.

Health authortities have launched an investigation to determine whether the photo is indeed of the Boiro resident and if so, how it came to be released for publication without permission.

It is not the first case of this kind in Spain. A woman in Barcelona complained that an image of her late husband, taken while he was being treated in hospital, was being used on cigarette packets.

All tobacco products in Spain now contain images designed to alert smokers to the health risks.

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Now Santa's House In The North Pole Is Listed On Zillow

huffingtonpost.com

Imagine binge-watching holiday movies and nomming on cookies in Santa Claus' house!!!

12/01/2016 02:05 pm ET | **Updated** 4 days ago Jenna Amatulli Trends Editor, The Huffington Post

Ho-ho-hold on to your hats because Santa's digs are now listen on real estate site Zillow.



The company just added an off-market listing that you just might recognize: Santa Claus' North Pole house.



The

listing says that the home is "steeped in Old World charm," and is a "toy-lover's paradise nestled on 25 idyllic acres at the North Pole – perfect for spirited reindeer games."



They even include this helpful map to show you exactly where the property is located.

We're most impressed by the kitchen, which features an oven with "12 different cookie settings."



Cozying up in Santa's crib is going to cost you, though. The "Zestimate" for buying the home is \$656,957, while renting will run you \$3,300 a month.





Zillow said in a press release that the home is priced according to "comparable homes in remote locations" with "a Santa premium."

Guess we know what's topping our Christmas list this year...





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Major crime ring busted with \$30k of stolen Nutella

08:44 news.com.au

Thieves busted with \$30K of stolen Nutella

November 26, 20161:54pm

POLICE have uncovered \$30,000 worth of stolen Nutella as part of a major investigation into a crime syndicate linked to drug trafficking, car theft and a kidnapping plot in Canada.

Investigators in York, Toronto, came across the truckload of the popular hazelnut spread in a warehouse, along with about \$5 million of stolen goods, including luxury cars, car parts, e-cigarettes and alcohol, as well as drugs and weapons.

Following an extensive wire-tapping investigation, police on Friday swooped on 23 people accused of being part of the crime group, including ringleader Balwinder Dhaliwal, an alleged criminal mastermind known as the "King of Car Thieves".

Dhaliwal's wife and 30-year-old son were among those arrested. More than 137 charges have been laid against the group, the *Toronto Star* reported.

"If there was a profit to be made by this group, this group would jump on the opportunity," Detective Sergeant Paul LaSalle from York Regional Police said.

Police originally began investigating the group over a single car theft and eventually uncovered a tangled web of criminal activity.

It's alleged the group stole expensive cars — including Lamborghinis, Maseratis, Porsches, BMWs and Lexuses — by breaking into homes to snatch keys. They then tampered with the cars and created phony paperwork to make it appear they had been imported from the United States.

Det Sgt LaSalle said the ring was also connected to cargo theft, including the entire truckload of Nutella.

"Yes, I said Nutella," he said.

Police said they also found drugs, firearms and cash during their investigations, and uncovered a kidnapping plot and plans to commit insurance fraud.

"I've never seen an investigation that did spiral into so many directions," said Det Sgt LaSalle.

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foxnews.com

Published November 16, 2016 FoxNews.com



(Oklahoma Highway Patrol)

An Oklahoma man was arrested on Saturday after leading police on a 208 mph chase.

Nineteen-year-old Hector Fraire first tripped a radar gun doing 84 mph on the Kilpatrick Turnpike in Oklahoma City, before speeding away as police tried to pull him over.

According to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Fraire's heavily modified 2011 Ford Mustang was then clocked doing 176 mph and 208

mph, and he tried to elude the chase vehicle by turning off his headlights and brake lights.

An Oklahoma Highway Patrol spokesman tells FoxNews.com that as the pursuing officer lost contact with the vehicle, he radioed ahead to any units in the area. A Canadian County Deputy sitting in a parking lot spotted the car and was able to intecept it. The driver then pulled over, dropped his keys out of the window, and was arrested and later charged with reckless driving and felony eluding.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

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Oldest remaining Tuskegee Airman, a St. Petersburg man, dies at

Oldest remaining Tuskegee Airman, a St. Petersburg man, dies at 101 11/20/16 [Last modified: Sunday, November 20, 2016 9:33pm] Photo reprints | Article reprints

tampabay.com

Tampa Bay Times 10:19.PM, Sunday, November 20th, 2016 PAUL GUZZOTampa Bay WINNER OF 12 PULITZER PRIZES

10:19.PM, Sunday,

Sunday, November 20, 2016

2:43pm



Willie N. Rogers was an American hero, and at age 101, he was a living example of the nation's history.

He was a member of the "Greatest Generation," which defeated the Axis powers in World War II, doing his part as a master sergeant in the all-black Tuskegee Airmen during the era of racial segregation in the U.S. military.

The longtime St. Petersburg resident died Friday from complications of a stroke.

He was the oldest surviving member of that original legendary 100th Fighter Squadron.



Willie Rogers died Friday of complications of a stroke. He was 101.

Mr. Rogers' nephew, Clinton Glover, said

his uncle deserves to be celebrated for his contributions to this country.

But Mr. Rogers would be uncomfortable with any hoopla, Glover said. "He didn't like a lot of fuss," Glover said. "He was humble. That's who he was."

In 2007, President George W. Bush saluted 300 surviving Tuskegee Airmen at the White House and apologized for any indignities they endured. They were then awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.



ie Rogers, a St. Petersburg resident, and one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, has died at 101. [Times files]

But Mr. Rogers was not there, nor were his daughters Felicia Rogers of St. Petersburg or Veronica Williams of Douglasville, Ga., even aware that their father was part of the first African-American military aviation squadron in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces.

They knew he had served in World War II, but he did not reveal that portion of the story until 2012.

Part of the reason for that silence, he'd tell his family, was because his work was on the ground in logistics and

administration, not in the sky where the heroics took place.

"He would always say there were many who deserved attention more, but were not here to receive it," Williams said.

But Mr. Rogers was involved in military action and was shot in the stomach and leg by German soldiers during a mission in Italy in January 1943.

He spent three months in a hospital in London and then returned to the war.

After Germany's surrender, Rogers witnessed the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. He arrived after it was liberated by American troops April 29, 1945, but his daughter wonders whether evidence of the horrific crimes there haunted him.

"He could give dates, names, locations of events from the war," Williams said. "But he didn't like to give specifics about what occurred to him. He saw things that were bad. And he experienced treatment because he was African-American that wasn't fair."

Still, the family worked hard to get him the credit he deserved after his Tuskegee service was disclosed in 2012.

Mr. Rogers received his Congressional Gold Medal in November 2013.

Also in recent years, he was presented with the keys to the cities of Lakeland and St. Petersburg. His portrait hangs in the St. Petersburg Museum of History.

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman noted Mr. Rogers' death in a tweet Sunday: "Rest in peace, our friend — St. Pete's 2015 Honored Veteran and Tuskegee Airman, 101-year-old Willie Rogers."

Born in Apalachicola in 1915, he moved to St. Petersburg after the war and established Rogers Radio Sales and Services that sold and repaired radios and other small appliances, said his daughter Veronica.

"He could fix anything," she said.

But she said his greatest attribute was his ability to love everyone unconditionally. Despite being mistreated as an African- American even while serving his nation, Mr. Rogers held no ill will to anyone.

"He recognized that we as people and he as a black man have come a long way but that there is still more to go," Williams said. "But in God's eyes there is no color, he'd say. We are all one and he lived by the greatest commandment — to love one another."

Until recently he continued to walk the short distance every Sunday from his apartment in Burlington Towers to services at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

On Saturday, before a noon service honoring Mr. Rogers, his family will make that trek in his honor.

While the family is appreciative that the community honors Mr. Rogers' military past, Williams hopes her father will be remembered most for his life's motto.

"Treat everyone with dignity, pride and integrity," she said. "He said that a lot. And he meant it."

Contact Paul Guzzo at pguzzo@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3394. Follow @PGuzzoTimes.

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stuff BENN BATHGATE

Last updated 13:52, November 20 2016

Protesters gathered on Sunday at the Destiny Church in Rotorua to voice their anger over church leader Brian Tamaki's comments about the 7.8 earthquake on Monday.

A protest was held outside Rotorua's Destiny Church on Sunday over self-proclaimed bishop Brian Tamaki's claim the Kaikoura earthquake was caused by gay people.

Around 30 protesters sang, waved placards and awaited the arrival of Tamaki while a steady stream of parishioners entered the church.

Tamaki, who was believed to be speaking at the Rotorua church on Sunday, was not spotted arriving. Church staff outside declined to comment.



BENN BATHGATE/FAIRFAX NZ Protesters outside the Church.



BENN BATHGATE/FAIRFAX NZ Flying the flag outside Destiny Church in Rotorua.

Protest organiser Dan Woodward said it was important the community took a stand against Tamaki's statements.

"Rainbow youth have a lot to deal with, it's huge to question your identity at a young age, especially in an environment that may not be open," he said.

Woodward said it was even more important as this year is the 30th anniversary since the decriminalisation of gay sex in New Zealand, and the protest had received strong support from the community.

"He's [Tamaki] the sound of one hand clapping," he said.

Woodward also said Tamaki's views are not necessarily shared by church parishioners.

"We're not dissing the church. The members do great things in their community. We're just here to say, your leader went too far," he said.

"We're not here to be confrontational - it's just to have a presence. There's no abuse from their side, so no need to be inflammatory."



BENN BATHGATE/FAIRFAX NZ Tamati Coffey and fellow protester outside Rotorua's Destiny Church.



BENN BATHGATE/FAIRFAX NZ Only one passing motorist appeared not to back the protest.

Former television presenter Tamati Coffey, who also attended the protest, said many people had been offended by Tamaki's comments.

"Putting the boot into gays and our community, we've got to stand up to it, we can't let that go unopposed," he said.

"We're not hateful people. Let's shower them with love".

There was only one sign of opposition to the protesters: a middle finger salute from a passing car.

- Stuff

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The PUBLIC DOMAIN REVIEW

A project of the Open Knowledge Foundation

Painted Photograph of an Unknown Man (ca. 1855-70)



rp-f-2002-115-smaller

In 1839, Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre announced that he'd developed a way of making a lasting image using, not the artist's brush or pen, but the rays of the sun. And so the revolutionary art of photography was born. It would be some decades though before colour could be captured, and so, with demand for colourful images high, photographic studios soon began to hand-colour their monochrome prints. Only three years after Daguerre's announcement, came the first American patent for hand-colouring daguerreotypes, with a second patent following soon after. There were two ways to steer a photograph from its monochrome existence into the world of colour: hand tinting, which involved subtley painting the image so that it was still identifiable as a photograph, and "over-painting", painting over a photograph so completely so as to entirely obscure its technological origins. The wonderful example featured above, found in the collection of the Rijksmuseum and of unknown provenance, is unusual in that it seems to be neither of these. The bold, almost Van Gogh-esque,

application of the paint seems to imply a desire to pass the image off as a painting, but there are sections of the photograph left entirely untouched. It could, of course, be that the job simply, for whatever reason, went unfinished. Though it is perhaps nice to think that this hybrid effect was deliberate — a conscious reflection of a radical period in art history, where the centuries old tradition of painting was meeting a quite different method of capturing a moment in time.

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rp-f-2002-115-crop

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Parallel worlds exist and interact with our world, say physicists

mnn.com

New theory explains many of the bizarre observations made in quantum mechanics.

Bryan Nelson November 6, 2014, 7:32 p.m.



Do parallel worlds ever cross paths? (Photo: Martin Brigden /flickr)

Quantum mechanics, though firmly tested, is so weird and anti-intuitive that famed physicist Richard Feynman once remarked, "I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics." Attempts to explain some of the bizarre consequences of quantum theory have led to some mindbending ideas, such as the Copenhagen interpretation and the many-worlds interpretation.

Now there's a new theory on the block, called the "many interacting worlds" hypothesis (MIW), and the idea is just as profound as it sounds. The theory suggests not only that parallel worlds exist, but that they interact with our world on the quantum level and are thus detectable. Though still speculative, the theory may help to finally explain some of the bizarre consequences inherent in quantum mechanics, reports RT.com.

The theory is a spinoff of the many-worlds interpretation in quantum mechanics — an idea that posits that all possible alternative histories and futures are real, each representing an actual, though parallel, world. One problem with the many-worlds interpretation, however, has been that it is fundamentally untestable, since observations can only be made in *our* world. Happenings in these proposed "parallel" worlds can thus only be imagined.

MIW, however, says otherwise. It suggests that parallel worlds *can* interact on the quantum level, and in fact that they do.

"The idea of parallel universes in quantum mechanics has been around since 1957," explained Howard Wiseman, a physicist at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, and one of the physicists to come up with MIW. "In the well-known 'Many-Worlds Interpretation', each universe branches into a bunch of new universes every time a quantum measurement is made. All possibilities are therefore realised – in some universes the dinosaur-killing asteroid missed Earth. In others, Australia was colonised by the Portuguese."

"But critics question the reality of these other universes, since they do not influence our universe at all," he added. "On this score, our "Many Interacting Worlds" approach is completely different, as its name implies."

Wiseman and colleagues have proposed that there exists "a universal force of repulsion between 'nearby' (i.e. similar) worlds, which tends to make them more dissimilar." Quantum effects can be explained by factoring in this force, they propose.

Whether or not the math holds true will be the ultimate test for this theory. Does it or does it not properly predict quantum effects mathematically? But the theory is certain to provide plenty of fodder for the imagination.

For instance, when asked about whether their theory might entail the possibility that humans could someday interact with other worlds, Wiseman said: "It's not part of our theory. But the idea of [human] interactions with other universes is no longer pure fantasy."

What might your life look like if you made different choices? Maybe one day you'll be able to look into one of these alternative worlds and find out.

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Penis that can be seen from space appears on golf course

Jen Mills for Metro.co.ukWednesday 30 Nov 2016 6:03 pm



Penis that can be seen from space appears on golf course

It's a sign (Picture: M&Y News Agency)

Aliens, is this your signal to mankind to go forth and multiply?

People are confused about this ancient fertility symbol... Or, in plain speaking, the gigantic cock and balls (with another faint outline next to it).

The shape is so large that it can be seen from space, showing up on a satellite image of a golf course.

Staff realised it was there when someone spotted it on Google Earth, and since then have been

wondering how it appeared there.

The prevalent theory is not that it was a mysterious alien crop circle, but that somebody got in to vandalise Boundary Lakes Golf Course in Hampshire.



Penis that can be seen from space appears on golf course

It can be seen from space (Picture: M&Y News Agency);

MORE:

'We think someone used a spade to dig it out,' Shaun Hall, head golf professional at the Hilton, told the Evening Times.

'When we were made aware of it, we decided the best way to correct it, without ruining the grass, was to wait for it to grow out on its own.

'It has all been sorted now.'

For now, though, the appearance remains a mystery.

Pensioner trampled to death by "notorious" sheep

sundayworld.com November 18th, 2016

A sheep who has been described as a "well known troublemaker" is believed to be responsible for the death of a French pensioner.

The 94-year-old, who was discovered with gruesome injuries, died when the sheep attacked him while he was out walking, according to reports in the French media.

The man's body was found by the side of an isolated footpath near the village of Cestas, south of Bordeaux, on Monday afternoon.

There were wounds on the man's face and body and when emergency services arrived the notoriously violent sheep was spotted lurking nearby.

A local resident said: "The sheep was a well-known troublemaker – he was always charging at people."

"Complaints had been made before about the animal, but he was still roaming free. Now this has happened."

Forensics teams believe that the sheep charged at the elderly man, knocked him to the ground and trampled him to death.

Local newspaper Sud Ouest confirmed that a number of people had seen the agressive sheep and that a local politician had suffered a fracture and bruising after she approached the animal after the fatal attack.

A police spokesman confirmed that the sheep was later rounded up and has since been put down.

SundayWorldAn INM website

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Cards Against Humanity live stream digging a massive hole for no reason

metro.co.uk

Harley Tamplin for Metro.co.ukSaturday 26 Nov 2016 10:51 pm



That is one seriously impressive hole (Picture: Cards Against Humanity)

For some reason, thousands of people are paying to dig this humongous hole and watching it live on YouTube.

To be fair, the live stream

is strangely alluring – but we really can't work out why people are spending actual money on this hole.

It's a simple premise: if you contribute, they keep digging, and the hole gets deeper.

And there's absolutely no reason behind it whatsoever.

The stunt has been organised by the people behind Cards Against Humanity, who started digging their 'holiday hole' on Black Friday.

The company said: 'The holidays are here, and everything in America is going really well. To celebrate Black Friday, Cards Against Humanity is digging a tremendous hole in the earth.

'As long as money keeps coming in, we'll keep digging.'

It's as simple as that.



How much deeper can it go? Does it matter? So many questions (Picture: Cards Against Humanity)

You might think the silly little project wouldn't last long – particularly when each dollar donated pays for half a second of digging time – but you'd be much mistaken.

That's because, somehow,

\$83,000 (£66,000) has been raised so far, and the dig is set to run well into Sunday.

So what happens if the hole gets so deep it strikes hot magma?

'At least then we'd feel something', the company helpfully tells us.

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The petrol-station guidebook that changed gastronomy

By David K Gibson 30 November 2016

bbc.com

B B C The petrol-station guidebook that changed gastronomy



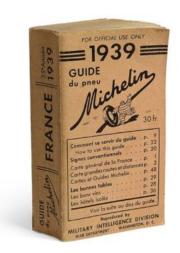
Michelin Guides

How a tyremaker's marketing gimmick wrote the book on restaurant ratings.

In an 1898 advertising poster, a man made

of rubber rings hoists a giant champagne coupe full of broken glass and nails (garnished with a horseshoe) and toasts "Nunc est bibendum" — Latin for "Now is the time drink." Michelin tyres, the ad implied, were tough enough to digest everything the road had to offer.

Advertising metaphor was a bit heavy-handed in 1898, but the idea of eating up the road (as delivered by that rotund rubber spokesman, formally known as Bibendum) would become the guiding principle of that fledgling French rubber company. And while durable tyres made them money, another marketing gimmick would change the world of dining.



Michelin Guides

In 1900, brothers Édouard and André Michelin released the first Guide Michelin. To the 3000 or so motorists in France who bought their tyres, they handed a slim book containing maps, basic maintenance instructions, and lists of mechanics, petrol stations, hotels, and — as information no more vital than the nearest gas pump — suggestions for restaurants along the routes. They were keen to make motoring a recreational hobby for the few well-to-do who actually owned cars, and

realized that giving them places to go and advice on getting there would result in more wear (and the occasional hobnail puncture) on their flagship products.

France was the perfect place to do this. Barely a century earlier, the first modern restaurants (which featured individual tables and a menu of choices, rather than communal tables serving whatever a tavern owner had handy) had popped up in Paris. The word "restaurant" itself, slyly French, translates best as "restorative," and though that initially indicated the supposedly healthy soups

served at the establishments, no wealthy getabout punishing his kidneys with an automobile ride over rutted donkey paths would fail to appreciate the restorative value of a glass of Bourgogne at a stationary table.

The red guidebooks were soon vital automotive equipment, living in glove boxes long after gloves were passé. As more and more cars entered the roads, the addresses of service stations became less necessary, and the guides began to focus exclusively on hospitality. In 1926, stars were added to establishments of special note, and a three-star system was implemented in 1933. To create the ratings, the company sends out an army (or more aptly, a secret police) of anonymous critics (who, continuing a theme, are called "inspectors"). They visit each restaurant several times, and then issue pronouncements that earn biblical reverence, a sort of Chow's Little Red Book. The Guide Michelin's genius may be its parsimony; unworthy restaurants are simply not listed, and three-star establishments are few and far between. Stars make or break both culinary careers and profit-and-loss reports, and chefs have driven themselves to madness and suicide in the quest to gain — or in the heartache of losing — a third star.

It seems odd that the greatest gastronomes in the world live and breathe by a book produced by an auto parts supplier.

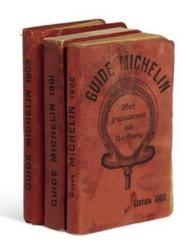
Those Michelin stars, so coveted, still refer obliquely to drives through the country. A one-star listing recommends a table as excellent in comparison to its peers — the place you should go should you be travelling nearby and have to choose. A two-star ranking indicates that a restaurant is worth a detour, while the lofty height of three-stardom indicates that an establishment is "worth a special journey." It is somewhat ironic that the Michelin Guides, particularly those of places outside of Europe, tend to focus on cities such as New York, Shanghai, Singapore, and Seoul — hardly places you'd pile into the Peugeot for a drive to a surprising little brasserie. In the public mind, Michelin's business of gastronomy has become almost fully separated from the business of driving (due in no small part to the effects of Bourgogne), and were it not for the smiling face of Bibendum on the books' covers, few today would associate the tyre company with the restaurant rating system. It seems odd that the greatest gastronomes in the world live and breathe by a book produced by an auto parts supplier.

The guides are not as indispensible as they once were, now that everyone is a critic. Some chefs have opted not to compete in the quest for stars, insisting that the things that Michelin inspectors find important — technical mastery, consistency, and an undeniable Gallic sensibility — are simply not things that modern diners care much about. And whatever people keep in their glove boxes these days, it is certainly not printed guidebooks.

Still, three-star restaurants are rarer than Nobel Prize winners, and the latter don't have to pass yearly exams. There is no surer guarantee of culinary quality than that found in the pages of an institution founded as a giveaway promotion by a couple of rubber barons more than a century ago.

On 5 December, collectors of motorcar and culinary history may bid on a complete collection of the guides (France editions), which spans 108 volumes representing 1900 through 2016. The auction house Christie's estimates the value of the lot between €20,000 and €30,000. For that, you could actually dine at a few of the legendary three-star locations, and maybe have enough left over for a set of tyres.

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Michelin Guides

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'Phantom' pilgrims fail to boost Rome tourism in Jubilee year

news@thelocal.it



Pope Francis gesturing to the Jubilee audience in St Peter's Square.

Photo: Alberto Pizzoli/AFP

AFP 18 November 2016 16:52 CET+01:00

The Vatican's Jubilee Year was supposed to draw 20 million Catholics to Rome, where hotels and restaurants were rubbing their hands with glee, waiting to cash in.

But two days before the closure of Pope Francis's special Year of Mercy, a disgruntled hospitality trade has slammed it as a flop.

"We were expecting much more than this. We did even worse than last year," Antonio Calicchia, who owns a traditional restaurant a

few hundred meters from Saint Peter's Square, told AFP.

"We heard some 20 million pilgrims would be coming to Rome. Where did they hide?" he quipped, bitterly.

The "Francis effect", which saw world leaders race to have their photos taken with the popular Argentine pontiff after his election in 2013, failed to translate into a boost to recession-weary businesses during the Jubilee, and local traders blame security fears.

"The attacks in Paris fuelled fear, not only in France, but in all Western countries," said Walter Parise, whose souvenir shop sells plates with the face of the pontiff on them as well as miniature models of the Colosseum.

"What's more, I remember that the media repeatedly said last year that the Vatican could also be targeted by terrorists," he added.

Rome's hotel and restaurant federation confirmed the gloomy results, saying the number of visitors in 2016 - tourists and pilgrims alike - was more or less the same as last year, at around 14 million.

"It is as if there hadn't been a Jubilee. I don't think anybody realized there was one," the federation's president Giuseppe Roscioli told II Fatto Quotidiano daily on Monday.

'Low-cost Jubilee'

In an article headlined "Empty churches and a city at a standstill, it's the phantom Jubilee," the left-leaning daily pointed to religious events that failed to draw the expected crowds and much-needed urban projects in the capital put on hold for the duration.

Waving sourly "Goodbye to the low-cost Jubilee", the Repubblica said the "many faithful who have crossed the Holy Doors of the four papal basilicas" - a symbolic step for Catholics in a Holy Year - brought "no benefit to Rome tourism".

The Vatican defended itself, pointing out the aim of the Jubilee was not to feed the Eternal City's coffers and saying Francis had wanted a sober event but one that could be celebrated around the world through numerous new "Holy Doors".

His message had been clear: a year ago, the Argentine had broken with tradition and symbolically opened the first such door in Bangui in the Central African Republic, before the centuries-old one in Saint Peter's.

The Vatican's Jubilee coordinator Rino Fisichella insisted that, by the Holy See's count, 20 million pilgrims did indeed flow through Rome, saying claims to the contrary came from "an overactive imagination".

But the tally takes into account not only the number of pilgrims who passed through the "Holy Door" at Saint Peter's.

The Vatican also counted the number of people attending papal audiences and events linked to the Jubilee like the canonization of Mother Teresa, meaning many pilgrims were probably counted twice.

By Franck lovene

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Take A Tour Of The Abandoned Subway Tunnels Beneath Los Angeles

Alex Davies Feb. 25, 2013, 11:51 AM 408,233 2013-02-25

businessinsider.com

BUSINESS INSIDER

Take A Tour Of The Abandoned Subway Tunnels Beneath Los Angeles

The Los Angeles subway does not get much respect, especially when compared to more popular systems around the world.

But while the current setup isn't too impressive, it does have some noble ancestry: the Pacific Electric Red Car and Los Angeles Railway Yellow Car lines, which ran from the end of the 19th century until the 1960s.

Those systems aren't running anymore, but much of the underground infrastructure hasn't been touched. Last year, Alissa Walker, who writes the blog Gelatobaby, took a tour of LA's original subway, and shared some of her photos with us.

The platforms and tunnels may be damp, dark, and very dirty, but they offer a remarkable glimpse at the past of the City of Angels.



Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

The tour started at the Los Angeles Subway Terminal Building, now a luxury apartment building.



The tour started at the Los Angeles Subway Terminal Building, now a luxury apartment building.

Wikimedia Commons

The tour was led by Forest City Development, John Lesak of Page & Turnbull, and Evan Janney of Metro 417.



Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

Everything is falling apart, but the signs of past elegance are clear.



Everything is falling apart, but the signs of past elegance are clear.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

There seems to be some level of construction going on — but not much.

The guide told Walker and other tour members that this space could be taken over and used as a grocery store.

Down we go.



Down we go.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

Even without trains or tracks, it still looks like a subway station.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

A painted sign still points to Hill Street, a major Los Angeles thoroughfare.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

In 1944, ridership on this system peaked.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons



Even without trains or tracks, it still looks like a subway station.



A painted sign still points to Hill Street, a major Los Angeles thoroughfare.

Since then, things have gone downhill.

In 1944, ridership on this system peaked.

Since then, things have gone downhill.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

It's unclear why all of these toilets are here.



It's unclear why all of these toilets are here.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

These pointing hand signs are unlike most public signs.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

We think they're creepy.

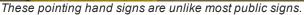
Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

This cavernous space can be accessed through a little hole in the wall, Walker says.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

This tunnel has been blocked off at the end.







We think they're creepy.



This cavernous space can be accessed through a little hole in the wall, Walker says.



This tunnel has been blocked off at the end.
Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

Here's what's on the other side.



Here's what's on the other side.

Alissa Walker / Creative Commons

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Pigs can be optimists or pessimists, depending on personality and mood, study finds

2016-11-15 latimes.com

You can't keep a positive pig down. A new study finds that, like humans, pigs can be optimists or pessimists, and that the pessimists are more strongly affected by their current environments.

The results, described in the journal Biology Letters, hint that the complex interplay between personality and mood may extend far beyond the human experience.

"This finding demonstrates that humans are not unique in combining longer-term personality biases with shorter-term mood biases in judging stimuli," the study authors wrote.

Is that glass half empty, or half full? Scientists already know that humans process information differently depending on their mood: If they're feeling negative, they'll tend to expect a worse outcome when facing ambiguous situations that could go either way; if they're feeling positive, they may expect a better one. Mood, together with baseline personality, influences a person's cognitive bias — patterns of thinking that may lead to deviations in good judgment.

Researchers have increasingly looked at cognitive bias in animals to study animal mood, the study authors wrote, but the results from these experiments have been inconsistent. Perhaps that's because the interaction of personality and mood, which together generate cognitive bias in humans, hadn't really been studied in animals until now.

For this paper, a team of scientists from Great Britain looked to probe that mood-personality dynamic in 36 domestic pigs, animals known for their intelligence. The researchers tested whether they had proactive or reactive personalities by studying how they behaved in an area with an unknown object. Proactive behavior is more active and less flexible; reactive behavior is more passive and more flexible. (In humans, proactivity has been linked to extraversion and reactivity has been linked to neuroticism.)

The scientists also tested their cognitive bias by training the pigs to recognize that the bowl in one corner of the room had yummy chocolates (a good outcome) and the bowl in the other corner had bitter coffee beans (a bad one, presumably). They'd been coated in sugar so that the pigs couldn't sniff them out until they reached their chosen bowl. The researchers then began putting more bowls in ambiguous spots — in the middle of those two corners, or slightly toward the chocolate corner, or slightly toward the coffee corner.

Before the tests, the animals would be put either in economy or deluxe lodgings. Both had solid floors, a slatted area and wooden blocks on chains for what the study authors called "enrichment." But the deluxe lodgings were roomier and had deep, comfy straw.

The scientists found that the pigs with proactive personalities tended to check out the middle bowl, even without the sure promise of a reward, regardless of the quality of their accommodations. Being stuck in the economy lodgings didn't change their underlying optimism.

Pigs with reactive personalities, on the other hand, were more optimistic about their chances of finding a chocolate in the middle bowl if they'd had the deluxe accommodations — and more pessimistic if they'd been in the less comfortable pen. Reactive animals, then, were much more affected by their environment, and their mood likely skewed their choices.

"These results suggest that judgement in non-human animals is similar to humans, incorporating aspects of stable personality traits and more transient mood states," the authors wrote.

The findings could help explain why previous tests of cognitive bias in animals were so inconsistent, the researchers said.

"Because proactive pigs behaved differently to reactive pigs, these findings could explain some of the inconsistent results between animal cognitive bias tests," the study authors wrote. "Accounting for personality differences between individuals may reduce some of this otherwise unexplained variation, making cognitive bias test outcomes more reliable and robust."

amina.khan@latimes.com

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Police nab suspects, fowl accomplice in break-in

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 5, 2016

 P_{res} NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (AP) — Two suspects in a weekend break-in at a Massachusetts convenience store had a fowl accomplice.

Northampton officers investigating a robbery in progress at a store at about 3:45 a.m. Sunday quickly found two men and a live rooster in a nearby car.

The men were arrested on breaking and entering and other charges, and the stolen property was recovered.

The rooster was not charged, but was taken to the station for safe keeping.

Police said on their official Facebook page that while they have provided temporary shelter for a variety of animals before, this was the first rooster.

There was no word on why the suspects had the bird. Their names were not released.

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Police: Man robs Chipotle, takes burrito

Molly Longman, mlongman@dmreg.com

press-citizen.com

A robber attempted to take money from the Chipotle Mexican Grill on Wednesday but fled with only a burrito, a police report says.

A man entered the restaurant at 3737 Merle Hay Road at about 6:30 p.m. He got in line and ordered a burrito, a female cashier told police.

When the man got to the cash register, he said he had a gun in his sweatshirt, opened a bag and demanded the cashier put money in it, according to the report.

The cashier told police she got scared and ran into the back room without giving the suspect any money. The man then grabbed the bagged burrito and ran out of the front door, police say.

"He got away with a \$7 burrito," Des Moines Police Sgt. Raymond Carrington said on the scene.

Police are reviewing video of the incident, the report says.

Police have not yet identified the suspect.

No word on whether the burrito was chicken or steak.

The case is under investigation.

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Police: Thief stole 86 lb. bucket of gold flakes worth \$1.6M

yahoo.com

NEW YORK (AP) — Police in New York City are looking for a quick-thinking thief who stole an 86-pound bucket of gold flakes worth nearly \$1.6 million off an armored truck in Manhattan.

The unidentified thief swiped the 5-gallon metal bucket off the back of the vehicle on Sept. 29 when a guard briefly went to the truck's cab to reportedly retrieve his cellphone.

The incident occurred in broad daylight on West 48th Street in Midtown Manhattan.

Security video shows the black bucket on a pallet inside the open back door of the truck. The man looks around, approaches the truck and lifts the bucket out.

Two men are standing on the sidewalk beside the truck, engaged in animated conversation, and don't appear to notice the man with the bucket walking past them.

Lots of other pedestrians and vehicles stream past as he heads down the sidewalk with one arm wrapped around the bucket and his other hand beneath it.

At one point, he sets it down at the curb, takes a breather for a few seconds, then hoists it again and steps into the street.

Police say it took the thief an hour to complete what would normally be considered a 10-minute walk. He then hopped into a white van and fled.

Police say the suspect likely didn't know what the bucket contained.

The suspect is believed to be hiding out in Florida.

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Man wakes up in morgue after 'dying' on night out

metro.co.uk

Toby Meyjes for Metro.co.ukWednesday 30 Nov 2016 2:12 pm



Drunk man 'dies' on night out, wakes up in morgue, goes straight back to pub

The 25-year-old apparently woke up in the morgue after drinking one too many vodkas (Picture: Shutterstock)

A man who was pronounced dead after drinking too much on a night out woke up in the morgue before heading back to the pub.

At least that is what is being claimed happened in Kamienna Gora in Poland, where a 25-year-old named Kamil is said to have briefly been thought to have died.

However, the same day a guard at the hospital is said to have heard strange noises coming from the morgue, opening the door he finds a naked corpse who asks for a blanket.

After that police were called, Kamil's identity established, medical tests carried out before he was finally told he could go home.

The story concludes with the 25-year-old, having recently cheated death, heading back to pub.

It is eerily reminiscent of an account from Russia last December, when a man was said to have died after drinking too much vodka at a party.

Again he woke up in the morgue before later returning to the party.

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Politician Who Criticized Squirrels Gets Hospitalized By Squirrel huffingtonpost.com

"It was like a suicide bomber."

11/22/2016 06:32 pm ET | **Updated** 5 days ago Hilary HansonViral News Editor, The Huffington Post



Actual squirrel not pictured.

Maybe Howard Brookins Jr. will think twice before he criticizes squirrels again.

In October, the alderman for Chicago's 21st ward went on a public tirade about "aggressive squirrels," griping that the furry critters kept eating through the city-supplied garbage cans.

But Brookins had no idea just how "aggressive" squirrels could be. On Nov. 13, the alderman found himself in the hospital with a skull fracture after a squirrel leapt into the path of Brookins' bike, wrapping itself in

the spokes and causing him to flip over the handlebars, The Star Tribune reports.

"I can think of no other reason for this squirrel's actions than that it was like a suicide bomber, getting revenge," he told the Tribune.

Some outlets, like the Chicago Sun Times, covered the incident but simply referred to it as a "freak accident," apparently afraid to call radical squirrel terrorism by name.

Brookins posted about the accident on Sunday to announce that he would be unable to attend events in the near future as he was still recovering from his serious injuries.

Sadly, it appears that the squirrel did not survive the incident, based on the photo that Brookins posted.

The alderman has made the image his Facebook cover photo, as if to serve as a warning for squirrels who may try the same thing.

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Raging hippo charges at and head-butts truck as terrified driver cowers

By Patrick Lion 21:11, 26 NOV 2016 Updated 21:11, 26 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

The extraordinary moment was captured by a motorist travelling through the Kruger National Park en-route to South Africa from working in Mozambique



A raging hippopotamus has been captured on film charging at and head-butting a truck - leaving the vehicle with a huge dent in its bonnet.

The extraordinary moment was captured by a motorist travelling through the Kruger National Park en-route to South Africa from working in Mozambique.

Wikus Ceronie, 26, filmed the

extraordinary sight on Friday, reeling as the hippo charged while repeatedly yelling "s**t!".

"This is my first time ever working in Mozambique and I was on a jolly journey back home to South Africa," he told latestsightings.com.



Raging hippo charges into car as terrified driver cowers in front seat

"I was crossing the border from Kruger National Park when I noticed a hippo on the bridge.

"There were people walking around in the nearby vicinity so I automatically assumed this hippo was used to humans.

"I was quite fascinated by this so I took out my phone to start filming.

"Suddenly the hippo turned and just started charging... I braced myself as I realized he wasn't going to stop.

"He hit the bakkie head on and then tried biting it.

"I guess after that he decided he had won because he just turned around and left.

Brit doctor reveals how she saved the life of a one-legged fisherman bitten on bottom by a hippo

"This was terrifying for me because I realized I had nowhere to go and no time to do it in.

"Beside me was a 50m drop so had he hit me on the side I have no doubt the car would have rolled down the embankment.



Raging hippo charges into car as terrified driver cowers in front seat

"Even though there was damage done to the bonnet of my vehicle and the door couldn't open, I'm grateful there were no serious injuries at the end of day."

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Raging hippo charges into car as terrified driver cowers in front seat

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Rattlesnakes like new north Austin state office buildings

Updated 7:12 pm, Saturday, November 26, 2016

chron.com

http://www.chron.com/news/texas/article/Rattlesnakes-like-new-north-Austin-stateoffice-10636033.php



AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Frequent sightings of rattlesnakes outside a couple of north Austin state office buildings have people who work in them rattled.

Jessica Marsh, the general counsel for the Texas Civil Commitment Office, tells the Houston Chronicle (http://bit.ly/2gdg3la) she was coming out the front door recently, looked down and "there it was."

State agencies in the buildings have sent memos to employees warning about the venomous reptiles.

An Austin herpetologist, James Tripp, says the snakes likely are living in landscaping rocks, shrubs or other areas around the buildings that border open fields. He says the activity is typical of developing areas where wildlife has been displaced. The Austin area also has seen more rain this year, leading to more reports of snakes.

Information from: Houston Chronicle, http://www.houstonchronicle.com

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The PUBLIC DOMAIN REVIEW

A project of the Open Knowledge Foundation

The Principle Navigations, Richard Hakluyt's great championing of Elizabethan colonial exploration, remains one of the most important collections of English travel writing ever published. As well as the escapades of famed names such as Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh, Nandini Das looks at how the book preserves many stories of lesser known figures that surely would have been otherwise lost.



In June 1586, William Harborne, the first English ambassador to the Ottoman court at Istanbul, wrote a letter. It was a tricky matter that he was trying to negotiate — the release of a few Englishmen taken prisoner by the Ottomans. The person who would decide the fate of the prisoners was Uluç Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor (or Beglerbeg of Algiers), himself a European Christian renegade, a Calabrian who had risen from the rank of an Ottoman oar slave to become the hero of the Battle of Lepanto and the Ottoman High Admiral. Harborne's efforts to free the English

prisoners had already made him deeply unpopular with the Beglerbeg, but Harborne was not writing to him. His letter was addressed instead to the Beglerbeg's Eunuch and Treasurer, Assan Aga, and he wrote as one Englishman to another.

Referring to the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt, "I trust you be ordained another Joseph", he writes, "to folow his example in true pietie, in such sort that notwithsta[n]ding your body be subject to Turkish thraldom, yet your vertuous mind free fro[m] those vices". In return, he would be assured of the favour of Elizabeth I and the gratitude of Harborne and his countrymen, "wherby both my selfe & others in that place having found you in all good offices faithfully affectionated, may in like case performe the like towards you, when & where you may have occasion to use me". We do not know whether the prisoners received their freedom. Neither do we know what happened to Assan Aga, the recipient of that letter. He is only seen again, looking back at the viewer in full Turkish costume, in a chance portrait made two years later (ca. 1588) in a German traveller's notebook. But thirteen years after Harborne wrote his letter, an English book would preserve at least a trace of who he was and who he used to be. Within its pages, a whole history of adventure, captivity, and transformation of a young man from Bristol, Samson Rowlie, son of Francis Rowlie, is condensed in a single terse headnote: "To Assan Aga, Eunuch & Treasurer to Hassan Bassa king of Alger, which Assan Aga was the sonne of Fran. Rowlie of Bristow merchant, taken in the Swalow."

Harborne's letter to the English renegade working behind the scenes of Ottoman government comes to us within the pages of what is perhaps the greatest collection of travel writing ever to be put together in any language, with a title as sonorous as the ambition behind it: *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation: Made by Sea or Over Land to the*



Most Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at Any Time within the Compasse of These 1500 Years: Divided into Three Several Parts According to the Positions of the Regions Whereunto They Were Directed; the First Containing the Personall Travels of the English unto Indæa, Syria, Arabia ... the Second, Comprehending the Worthy Discoveries of the English Towards the North and Northeast by Sea, as of Lapland ... the Third and Last, Including the English Valiant Attempts in Searching Almost all the Corners of the Vaste and New World of America ... Whereunto is Added the Last Most Renowned English Navigation Round About the Whole Globe of the Earth.

In years that followed, *The Principal Navigations* would become, in many ways, a cornerstone of Britain's imperial ambitions, but it also serves as a

unique record of figures and voices, of lives and experiences like that of Samson Rowlie, that could so easily otherwise have been lost. It seems appropriate to celebrate it this year, the 400th anniversary of the death of the man who compiled it almost single-handedly, and in the process helped to lay the foundations of a moderately-sized island nation's rather disproportional global influence and presence in the furthest corners of the world.



Richard Hakluyt (1553–November 23, 1616), the orphaned second son of a Welsh family that had settled in Hertfordshire a few generations ago and supported in his studies through the benevolence of the state and guild scholarships, was introduced to the wonders of geography as a young boy through the chance glimpse of "an universal Mappe" lying on the desk of his older cousin and guardian. Later, Hakluyt would tell the story of how that impromptu lesson in the new advances in geography had ended with the Bible; his cousin and namesake, Richard Hakluyt Senior, had called upon the verses of Psalm 107, that speak of those who "go down to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." It was a claim that would have rung true for Hakluyt, growing up at a time when the expansion of European influence and trade across the world was well under way.

Elsewhere in Europe, a roll-call of great names that would become familiar to schoolchildren in ages to come had been accumulating for some time, from Marco Polo's late thirteenth-century expeditions to China, to Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India and the voyages of Christopher Columbus to the New World in the late fifteenth century, but those figures and narratives were merely indicative of a significantly wider surge of global awareness within Europe. English participation in that great surge, however, as an older and wiser Hakluyt would come to realise, was piecemeal, under-funded, and disorganised. English seafaring expertise was not in short supply; if the exploits of Hakluyt's contemporaries like Martin Frobisher, Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, and Humphrey Gilbert himself were not enough to prove their credentials, the English victory over the Spanish Armada campaign of 1588 — albeit with significant assistance from bad weather and bad tactics on the part of the Spanish — was testimony enough. But the Armada also illuminated the problems that plaqued English seafaring and its future. The English fleet was an extemporary mixture of vessels, with the navy reinforced by hired and volunteer merchantmen and boats that were often better furnished and victualled than the notoriously ill-furnished royal ships. It was manned by sailors driven by very different incentives (from untried noblemen to privateers, merchant-adventurers, and fishermen volunteers), and led by men constantly fighting a losing battle

against a seriously cash-strapped Exchequer and state support that either came too late or was absent altogether.



The Principal Navigations was driven by Hakluyt's acknowledgement of that neglect. In his dedicatory letter to Elizabeth I's Principal Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, he tells the story of how, during his only trip abroad to the French court in 1583–88 to serve as chaplain to Sir Edward Stafford, the English ambassador, he had "both heard in speech, and read in books other nations miraculously extolled for their discoveries and notable enterprises by sea, but the English of all others for their sluggish security, and continuall neglect of the like attempts [...] either ignominiously reported, or exceedingly condemned." Yet there were "few or none" who were able or willing to respond to that insult, and no one cared "to recommend to the world,

the industrious labors, and painefull travels of our country men". Hakluyt's response, first in the folio volume of three parts in 1589 and then in the hugely expanded three monumental volumes of the second edition in 1598–1600, was meant above all to be a commemoration of those men. "For, which of the kings of this land before her Majesty, had theyr banners ever seene in the Caspian sea?" he asks rhetorically in that letter to Walsingham.

Which of them hath ever dealt with the Emperor of Persia as her Majesty hath done, and obtained for her merchants large and loving privileges? who ever saw before this regiment, an English Ligier in the stately porch of the Grand Signor at Constantinople? who ever found English Consuls and Agents at Tripolis in Syria, at Aleppo, at Babylon, at Balsara, and which is more, who ever heard of an Englishman at Goa before now? what English shippes did heretofore ever anker in the mighty river of Plate? passe and repasse the unpassable (in former opinion) straight of Magellan, range along the coast of Chili, Peru, and all the backside of Nova Hispania, further than any Christian ever passed, travers the mighty bredth of the South sea, land upon the Luzones in despight of the enemy, enter into alliance, amity, and traffike with the princes of the Moluccaes, and the Isle of Java, double the famous Cape of Bona Speranza, arive at the Isle of Santa Helena, and last of al returne home most richly laden with the commodities of China, as the subjects of this now flourishing monarchy have done?





Hakluyt's paean of praise is quite an effective preview of the treasures in store within the pages of his volume, but what made *The Principal Navigations* both unusual and pathbreaking was not just its immense range or its focus

(Hakluyt promised in his introductory letter to the reader that he would "meddle in this worke with the Navigations onely of our owne nation") — it was its approach. When Hakluyt came to compile his collection, he had, essentially, two models to follow. The first of these were the books published by writers like the German geographer Sebastian Münster, who had built their reputations by compiling what Hakluyt rather waspishly dismissed in *The Principal Navigations* as "wearie volumes ... of universall Cosmographie". These were magisterial geographical descriptions of the world seen through the heuristic lens of Christian doctrine, which mixed classical and medieval authorities, often fairly indiscriminately, with snippets of data gathered from contemporary travel. The second was offered by European scholars like Giovanni Battista Ramusio and Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, or the English Richard Eden. These were men whom Hakluyt admired, who depended far more on current first-hand accounts (although often through translation and summary) than on the secondhand redactions of the old cosmographies. But they focused mostly on non-English sources. Beyond these texts in print, however, thousands of documents circulated in private correspondence at home and abroad, and in the papers of the English trading companies: a store of both foreign and English voices, fleeting, scattered, incomplete, immensely vulnerable to both time and human carelessness.



These are the voices that *The Principal Navigations* preserves. Hakluyt's advertised aim, as he declares in his preface, was to allow "those men which were the paynefull and personall travellers [to] reape that good opinion, and just commendation which they have deserved, and further that every man might answere for himselfe, justifie his reports, and stand accountable for his owne doings, [he had] referred every voyage to [its] Author, which both in person hath performed, and in writing hath left the same". "Whatsoever testimonie I have found in any author of authoritie appertaining to my argument, either stranger or naturall", he notes, "I have recorded the same word for word, with his

particular name and page of booke where it is extant."

Among the pages of *The Principal Navigations*, therefore, we find texts like Thomas Stevens' letter to his father. In the correspondence, Stevens — an English Catholic who escaped to Rome to train as a Jesuit priest, and became the first Englishman in 1579 to reach Goa — described what lay in store for sailors in the tricky passage around the Cape of Good Hope: "Their gums waxe great and swell, and they are faine to cut them away, their legs swell, and all the bodies becommeth sore, and so benummed, that they cannot stirre hand nor foot, and so they die of weaknesse, others fall into fluxes and agues, and die thereby." A decade later, in his account of a journey to Benin in 1588 in search of the lucrative pepper trade, Anthony Ingram describes how after a long journey and despite collecting 64 serons (one seron is roughly 6–7 lbs) of pepper and 28 elephants' teeth, they struggle to get the goods to the ship because the men are so weakened by "the disease of the fever".

There are wonders: Dionyse Settle's first person account of Martin Frobisher's 1577 voyage to northeastern Canada records a glimpse of icebergs and a dead narwhal, whose single tusk, "of length two yards lacking two inches," made the sailors conclude that they had seen a "sea unicorn". There is the tedium of travel and tragedy: Stephen (or István) Parmenius' letter to Hakluyt himself, dated August 1583, records his disappointment on arrival at St John's Harbour as a member of the crew on Sir Humphrey Gilbert's voyage to Newfoundland. "The trees for the most part are Pynes",

Parmenius wrote, and "all the grasse here is long, and tall, and little differeth from ours." There were no wonders, not even a single mermaid — even though they were supposed to be around (Theodore de Bry's *America* would depict them at St John's Harbour a few years later). And the "island which your men call Penguin because of the multitude of birdes of the same name"? Well, grumbled Parmenius, "wee neither sawe any birds, nor drew neere to the land, the winds serving for our course directed to another place". He was referring, of course, to the Great Auk — unrelated to the penguin, although it was the first bird to be called penguin — which was to become extinct by the 1840s due to overenthusiastic hunting by early explorers. When they had stocked up on supplies "in this place", Parmenius hoped, "we purpose by the helpe of God to passe towards the South", to the greater things "that are reported of those Countreys, which we go to discover." But Hakluyt would have known the end of that particular story. Bookish, earnest young Parmenius was lost at sea just weeks after writing his letter, like Sir Humphrey Gilbert himself. Only two of the five ships had returned, carrying their own reports and those of the lost men.



Hakluyt organised such documents alongside more formal, historical accounts and reports, chronologically and in three parts according to region (so the first document is an account of King Arthur's supposed conquest of Iceland in C.E. 517, and the last is Hakluyt's own translation of a report on Spanish navigation that was provided by a captured Spanish pilot Pedro Diaz, dated February 1586). He also divided them according to type, under two separate headings: the "Voyages" themselves, and official documents, information, and correspondence connected with those voyages, the "Ambassages, Treatises, Priviledges, Letters and observations" that often supplement, interrogate, and

occasionally contradict the stories told in the narratives that accompany them.

His first edition in 1589 ran to over eight hundred densely-packed folio pages. By 1600, the second edition had grown even bigger, running to over 1,760,000 words in three folio volumes and about two thousand pages. And this was not all. At the same time as he was collecting this huge expanse of material, others published their own accounts and translations with Hakluyt's encouragement: Thomas Hariot, who wrote about his influence in *The Briefe and True report of the new found land of* Virginia (1590) and John Pory, who claimed that Hakluyt was "the onely man that mooued [him] to translate" John Leo Africanus' History of Africa, were two among many. Hakluyt's own translations included, among others, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius' enormously influential treatise, the *Mare* liberum (The Free Sea or The Freedom of the Seas), which argued that no nation could impose restrictions on seafaring trade since the sea did not belong to any single nation. His reports on trade opportunities and commodities, navigation conditions, and local inhabitants were commissioned by London's growing trading companies like the Virginia Company and the East India Company, while The Principal Navigations became one of those books that their ships were recommended to carry as essential reading. By the time of his death, Hakluyt's work and advocacy of Protestant English settlements and colonies in the New World, both in writing and as an advisor to the state and the trading companies, had become the cornerstone of English colonial and imperial plans and established the legacy of English explorations in general.

Hakluyt died on November 23, 1616. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, although the exact location of the burial site is now lost. At the height of the British Empire, Victorian scholars like the



historian J. A. Froude understandably celebrated his work as the great "prose epic of the modern English nation", and the eponymous Hakluyt Society was established with the aim to follow his example in publishing accounts of travel and exploration, an aim it continues to pursue to this day. In recent years, however, both *The Principal Navigations* and Hakluyt himself have started to demand our attention yet again, but perhaps not for quite the same reasons. Hakluyt's legacy was not just a nationalistic celebration of English imperial ambitions. *The Principal Navigations* memorialises not just the successes of English travels, the great figures and great wonders, but also the elusive traces of those who disappeared, the disappointment of the non-event, the tedium of travel, and the absence of wonder. Beyond the great figures of Raleigh, Frobisher, and Gilbert, beyond

the pioneering circumnavigations of Drake and Cavendish, Hakluyt's collection stands testimony to the ordinary traveller and the individual experience of travel — fragile, unexpected, and so often hostage to fortune. From shadowy figures like Samson Rowlie, "taken in the Swallow" and transformed into Assan Aga, the Ottoman eunuch treasurer, to voices like that of young Parmenius of Buda, who had hoped to write a new Latin epic, did not get to see the penguins, and sunk with a ship called *The Delight*, Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* bears witness to the lives of hundreds of travellers, without whom the story of "English" travels and voyages would be much the poorer.

Nandini Das is a literary and cultural historian, and Professor of English Literature at the University of Liverpool, UK. In multiple essays and books such as *Robert Greene's Planetomachia* (2007), *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (2011), and *Enchantment and Dis-enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama*, co-edited with Nick Davis (2016), she has explored the genre of romance, Renaissance prose fiction, and the place of the everyday in late sixteenth century literature.

Public Domain Works

- The Principal Navigations (1598) by Richard Hakluyt.
 - Internet Archive (1903–5 edition)
 - Internet Archive via University of Penn (1885–90 edition)
- Voyages of the Elizabethan seamen to America: thirteen original narratives from the collection of Hakluyt (1880) edited by Edward John Payne.
 - Internet Archive

Further Reading

Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession for an English America (*Yale University Press*, 2010)

by Peter C. Mancall

This book describes in detail the life and times of Hakluyt, a trained minister who became an editor of travel accounts. Hakluyt's Promise demonstrates his prominent role in the establishment of English America as well as his interests in English opportunities in the East Indies.

Voyages in Print: English Narratives of Travel to America 1576-1624 (*Cambridge University Press*, 2007)

by Mary C. Fuller

An invigorating addition to the current discussion of travel writing and its relationship to colonial theory, demystifying the early history of English America as glorious expansion.

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https://urbanpostmortem.wordpress.com/2016/11/23/richfords-mystery-spot/

Posted on November 23, 2016By Chad Abramovich





The hill country up near hardscrabble East Richford is an older, left behind Vermont of farmhouses with sagging rooflines, boarded up country stores, rivers, rusted iron

railroad bridges over narrow underpasses, and toothpick rows of harvested corn stocks left in bleak fields.

It was up in this part of the state under 6 inches of snow and roads that made me thankful for snow tires that I was going oddity hunting.

We were the only car on state route 105A, a pretty desolate spur road connecting route 105 to a sparsely used border crossing at Sutton, Quebec. The bad tarmac ran alongside the hypothermic waters of the Mississqoui as the snow began to tumble down to the ground in an amiable silence. "Man, I love roads that follow rivers" my friend enthused. "Yeah, roads that follow rivers are some of humankind's' best achievements" I returned, and we both cracked a grin.

We continued to be the only traffic as we turned onto the dirt main drag of East Richford, which was only a few older wooden homes in various states of decrepitude. Past the abandoned Gulf station, the road sharply right angles at Quebec before beginning its ascent up into the border hills. We passed an old graveyard where the invisible line between the two nations slashed through the middle of, before my friend suddenly stomped on his breaks, our car skidding for a few seconds on the slush and ice. "Oh......" he breathed, looking at the granite boundary marker to our right. "Shit, are we breaking the law? We're in Canada! Don't we have to check in?"

"The only law we're breaking is the law of gravity!" I quipped.



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According to Sir Isaac Newton, objects fall. No exceptions. But if Franklin County lore has a flicker of truth to it, perhaps not.

This remote border road that made it's way through some of Vermont's most stark and impoverished back country near East Richford is known as "Richford's Mystery Spot," according to Joseph E. Citro and Diane E. Foulds in their 2004 book Curious New England: The Unconventional Traveler's Guide to Eccentric Destinations. The "mystery" is that gravity in this spot reputedly likes to behave unorthodoxly. For example, cars are said to roll uphill! WTF?



dsc 0339 pe-2

These oddities aren't unique to the Green Mountain State. Various places around the U.S. manifest the same puzzling phenomenon. Nearest to Vermont, there are two "mystery spots" in the Massachusetts towns of Greenfield and Harvard, and one in Middlesex, N.Y., on the awesomely named Spook Hill Road.

Citro and Foulds reported that they weren't able to locate Richford's mystery spot. Years ago, in a brown and bleak November, I made my own attempt. Being an avid Vermont enthusiast and local weird worker, I couldn't pass this one up. I enlisted a friend, who couldn't contain his mirth when I

explained we were aiming to defy gravity, and quickly signed on for the road trip. I guess breaking the laws of physics is a good way to make plans.

The mystery spot is aptly named, I discovered when we turned east out of Richford village toward the looming form of Jay Peak, because it's no easy place to find. The night before, I had consulted the state atlas and decided that the most likely location was the curiously named East Richford Slide Road, a hilly dirt byway that rolls over the foothills of Jay Peak with a few trailers and abandoned farmhouses along its length, before depositing you back on Route 105 in Jay town. It serpentines over the border a few times, but because you can't get anywhere in Canada unless you hike through miles of mountain wilderness, the crossings aren't guarded.

So how do you discover such an area? There had to be a first person to be bewildered here. My research had identified the late Dolph Dewing of Franklin as the first person to report experiencing the mystery spot's effects in 1978. According to Citro in Weird New England: Your Travel Guide to New England's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets, Dewing started by sharing the discovery with his friends, then brought a busload from the Franklin Senior Center to witness the phenomenon.

In October 1985, *County Courier* reporter Nat Worman accompanied Dewing to the spot and watched as he stopped his 1979 Dodge there and revved it to prove it was in neutral. After about 60 seconds passed, the car began rolling uphill, accelerating gradually from 10 to 15 mph.

My friend and I weren't so lucky on that windy November day. We parked our car in several places along the rural road and waited. Despite our relocations, nothing happened.

We pulled over again and mulled things over. Did we have to be in Canada for the "mystery" to work, or on the Vermont side? Maybe we just hadn't found the right spot.

Sitting beneath border skies as the sun shone off the hood of my friend's Chevy, I wondered if Dewing had been fooled by some sort of optical illusion. Was it really antigravity? Or magnetism? Or a hoax?

Researching later on, I found that the answers may be closer than I expected and rooted in the rational. There are a bunch of "mystery spots" around the globe, some with equally evocative names such as "gravity hills" and "gravity roads." So, do the laws of physics simply stop applying there?

Nope. What baffles tons of spectators is actually an optical illusion, one that's been debunked by physicists. Or, at least, that's the prevailing theory.

"Gravity hills" and the like are places where the geography of the surrounding land produces an illusion, making a downhill slope appear to go uphill. Obstructions on the horizon can be a key factor in creating this illusion, because they rob us of the reliable reference points we use to determine which way is up. The mind, in short, is tricked.

In a 2006 Science Daily article, Brock Weiss, a physics professor at Penn State Altoona, investigates a gravity hill in Bucks County, Penn., and concludes that this local oddity isn't that odd. "You are, indeed, going downhill even though your brain gives you the impression that you're going uphill," Weiss explains. Using GPS, the investigators demonstrated that the hill's starting point had a greater elevation than its ending point, despite appearances to the contrary. And, if these mystery spots really were gravitational anomalies, wouldn't your sense of balance and the objects around you be affected, instead of just your vehicle?

Just as I was pretty much convinced that I could put this into my "mystery solved" pile, Linda Collins of the Richford Historical Society brought me back into a sentiment of uncertainty. I phoned the town offices looking for answers, and instead had an awkward silence sent my way. I had almost thought they hung up on me, before the town clerk spoke up and said she had no idea what I was talking about. So she directed my call to Linda, who had a lot to say about Richford's weird side.

"Oh yeah, I know about the hill. I think it's called a 'gravity hill'. I learned about it when I was researching the UFO sightings in town" said an amused Collins.

Back in the 1970s, she related, a few Richford residents reported seeing strange moving lights over town. Wanting to chronicle the frenzy for the *Burlington Free Press*, Collins made phone calls, which led her to a government facility in Boulder, Colo. She refers to it as "the strange things facility," because "I don't remember what they were called — it's been so long since I've talked about this!"

According to Collins, the feds told her that a singular magnetic pull or gravitational force in the Richford area had the potential to "attract things." They didn't specify what things, and she surmised there was probably more that they weren't telling her. "You know, government secrecy? They were probably doing some testing or something and didn't want that getting out to the public," Collins said. Later on, Collins learned of the "mystery spot" phenomenon.

"Does the historical society get many inquiries about it?" I asked. "No one up here really knows that much about it," she said with a laugh. "It was such a small deal when it happened. Lots of folks in town now don't really know a lot about our history anymore."

"So what's your opinion on it? Do you think it's an illusion, or is there something actually weird with gravity in Richford?"

"Well....I mean, I don't know what to tell you. Richford is a weird town. If all this business about the UFOs and gravitational pulls are true, then who knows."

Border towns are weird in general, in both their local lore and for political complications and the infrastructure meant to delineate a sense of placement. Richford's mythology resume is a bulky one of giant birds that have swooped down and snatched babies, UFOs, giant wolves that may live around the border, a possible "window area" near Jay Peak, and a former rendezvous for rumrunners and smugglers.

But Richford has it easy, compared to what may be New England's strangest border community, which I hope to check out one day.

If the Richford, VT/Sutton, QC area really does have some sort of unique magnetic force, that would set Vermont's mystery spot apart from the scores of others around the globe that can be debunked by aesthetic tomfoolery.

Because I was trying to write about this for *Seven Days*, I decided that was a great excuse to take another trip up to border country with another friend, and give it another go, this time in a Ford (if that makes any sort of difference)

Back up the East Richford Slide Road, we drove around looking for answers and an outlandishly cool experience, stopping and going almost the entire length of the slick road, with some situationally motivating Jazz coming quietly through the radio.

We think there was one spot where the car rolled in a direction that wasn't backward, but after getting out of the car and scrutinizing the area, the very very gradual incline of the road may have actually been inconspicuously



One of my favorite Richford landmarks, as seen downtown.

dipping downhill, but the eye is fooled from a larger uphill lip of an intersection beyond it which forms the horizon line. Was this the spot? If so, Dewing's car was recorded going at least 15mph, while we were going 5.

I'm not sure if I left empty handed or not to be honest, but it was an enjoyable way to spend my morning.

Whatever the explanation for the mystique, the Richford Mystery Spot is still one of my favorite examples of Vermont obscura, because it's accessible and fun. If only it were a little easier to locate the exact spot where the optical illusion — if that's what it is — kicks in.





To all of my fans and supporters, I am truly grateful and humbled by all of the support and donations throughout the years that have kept Obscure Vermont up and running.

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RIP Midgetville, one of N.J.'s weirdest roadside attractions

By Anthony G. Attrino | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com | Follow on Twitter on November 18, 2016 at 12:45 PM, updated November 18, 2016 at 5:45 PM

nj.com



midgetville sign .JPG

TOTOWA – Demolition crews are expected to begin tearing down homes ravaged by Hurricane Irene in a borough neighborhood known locally as "Midgetville," which has long been a roadside attraction to area teens.

The borough council on Tuesday awarded a \$49,375 bid to Control Industries, Inc., to tear down three homes on Norwood Terrace and one on Riverview Drive, according to a NorthJersey.com report.

The neighborhood was dubbed Midgetville because of its scaled-down homes that, according to urban

legend, were built as quarters for Alfred Ringling and his diminutive circus performers, according to the publishers of Weird NJ.

The small, isolated neighborhood consists of tiny cottages that were once vacation homes. The area is flood-prone, sitting along the banks of the Passaic River, and the homes were damaged severely during Hurricane Irene in 2011.

The lure of Midgetville has drawn countless carloads of teens to the neighborhood over the decades, often leading to encounters with residents who grew tired of being known as a sideshow attraction.

Buyouts were completed through the county's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, according to NorthJersey.com.

The homes being torn down are at 23, 31, 43 and 61 Norwood Terrace, according to the report. A fourth home is at 416 Riverview Drive. In 2013, the borough council obtained \$1.25 million in bonds to assist with the buyouts, according to NorthJersey.com.

Demolitions are expected to begin next month.

Anthony G. Attrino may be reached at tattrino@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter @TonyAttrino. Find NJ.com on Facebook.

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Rogue Beaver Apprehended After Trashing Store That Sells Fake Trees

huffingtonpost.com

This ain't the forest, bud.

12/01/2016 12:22 pm ET



Don't you hate it when the store doesn't have what you're looking for?

That was the apparent dilemma for a lil' beaver who wandered into a dollar store in Charlotte Hall, Maryland, this week.



Photos tweeted by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office show the critter appearing to browse the store's selection of Christmas trees before trashing the joint.

While authorities haven't released

a motive, The Washington Post made the astute observation that the forest creature acted out *after* finding that the store's Christmas trees were all artificial.



The sheriff's department tweeted that the adorable vandal is now in the care of a wildlife rehabilitator.

We hope you find the trees you're looking for eventually, little one.

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bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ... as found by BBC Monitoring

28 November 2016



Grandfather Frost delivers presents to Russian children on New Year's Eve

Image copyrightSTR/AFP/Getty Images

Russia's media regulator has offered official guidance on children's letters to Grandfather Frost, the country's equivalent of Father Christmas, over concerns that youngsters are handing over too much personal information.

Roskomnadzor, which also regulates telecoms, says it's seen a growth in the number of websites offering letters to Grandfather Frost which collect children's personal details. In a post on the VKontake social network it says it's investigating 76 such sites.

Image caption

The suggested letter is rather formal, but opens in traditional fashion with blank spaces for children to fill in their first name, age and good behaviour. "This year I have been studying very well... I was obedient to my parents," the letter template reads, before adding a few lines on the weather. "They say that you give presents to children for the New Year. Please give me and my parents [blank]. I would be very grateful for this present. Thank you!"

The regulator also warns parents and children that the real Grandfather Frost "will never ask for your precious personal details" such as full name, date of birth, address or school.

Russians responding to the organisation's VKontakte post aren't very impressed by the move. "Such nonsense is this what taxpayers' money is spent on?" reads one comment. Another person wonders if officials have nothing else to do: "Prices are going up, mass redundancies, and they are writing letters to Grandfather Frost."

But one user was inspired to create his own template mocking the authorities and the political climate in Russia. "My name is [blank]. I love living in Russia. In the election my parents voted for [blank]. This year I didn't visit banned internet sites," the letter reads. "I support the destruction of food items under the sanctions and reunification with Crimea. Don't give me any presents, I have everything! Please ban even more streaming websites next year! Thank you!"

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Santa Cruz's Pink Umbrella Man: Whatever happened to him?

mercurynews.com



The "Umbrella Man", AKA Robert Steffen, in downtown Santa Cruz, 2007. (Patrick Tehan/Mercury News)

The "Umbrella Man", AKA Robert Steffen, in downtown Santa Cruz, 2007. (Patrick Tehan/Mercury News)

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SANTA CRUZ — A decade ago, there was no more popular topic of conversation in downtown Santa Cruz than the Pink Umbrella Man. Around the time that all of those "Keep Santa Cruz Weird" bumper stickers starting showing up, a middleaged man appeared on Pacific Avenue in heavy make-up, dressed in a flowery, luridly pink get-up like a Florida vacationer in a David Lynch movie.

There were two other things you noticed about him: 1) though he was constantly smiling and making eye contact with everyone he passed, he never spoke and 2) he walked in maddeningly slow baby steps everywhere he went, even in crosswalks under the glare of perturbed drivers.

The Pink Umbrella Man took his slow walk down Pacific every single day over the course of several years until one day he vanished, never to return. The fact he was unvarying in his routine and kept his mouth shut made him a kind of walking Rorschach test. The chatter on the street often told you less about Robert Steffen — the man under all that pink — than it did about those talking about him. To some, he was a sunny delight. To others, a tolerable annoyance. To still others, a creepy nutjob.

Though the Pink Umbrella Man social experiment is now a thing of the past, Steffen is still alive, still in Santa Cruz, still walking every day. His daily route is different — he's a regular on the Wharf and West Cliff Drive now. He's less pink than he used to be. His strides are normal, and he's quite pleased to engage in conversation.

"Almost daily, people will say, 'I haven't seen you in years," said Steffen, enjoying a cup of green tea at the Ideal Bar & Grill. "They're surprised to see me because they thought I had disappeared."

These days, he's not the mystery that he was in his baby-stepping years.

"The interactions with people are quite a bit different now," he said. "On Pacific Avenue, I was more of an object. People would project a lot more."

For a guy whose sole aim was only to spread a little happiness, there's not a ton of happiness in Robert Steffen's story. Once a promising electrical engineer, he has struggled with mental illness including crippling depression for years. He's been homeless for extended periods twice. While doing the Pink Umbrella Man, he was subject to all kinds of pranks, hostility, verbal abuse, even physical assault. For as many people who find him endearing, others find threatening, or a just an easy target for harassment.

Steffen grew up in a military family, moving around a lot. He attended college in upstate New York, and landed a job at the Ames Research Center in Mountain View. He pursued art in his free time, but still contentment eluded him, until something cracked, and he walked away from it all.

He first showed up on Pacific Avenue in 1999, not as the Pink Umbrella Man, but as the Black Plastic Bag Guy. Homeless at the time, he sat on a bench under a plastic bag, hanging a sign on his shopping cart reminding people he was running for president.

He said the plastic bag thing was a coping mechanism.

"It was a way to give myself some space, some freedom. Being homeless there is no place to go to retreat to. You're continuously exposed to other people, which is a problem because there are people who will go after you even when you sleep. Even being completely non-threatening, there are people who feel that your very existence is anathema."

Eventually, he got a room at the Palomar Inn. That's when Pink Umbrella Man was born. Besides an urge to brighten people's day and to keep his own interior demons at bay, he said that the persona was an effort to test people's tolerance for personal freedoms by subverting social norms in everything from how people dress to strangers making eye contact in public.

"People need to be more open to the ways of others," he said. "As long as people are nonviolent, they should be able to do anything they want. Basically, the model to me is children playing. As long as they're not hurting anyone, let them do it."

As the Pink Umbrella Man, Steffen has probably been subject to more random human cruelty than most of us — from kids throwing rocks at him, to adults assaulting him. Still, what does it say about a man who has endured all that and still feels the need to engage the public every day?

"Where else in the world can one go to find a population of people so completely accepting of others?" Steffen said of his love of Santa Cruz, despite all the ups and downs. "Tell me where it is, and I'll move there."

Getting to Know Robert Steffen

Home: Santa Cruz

Claim to fame: The Pink Umbrella Man, a well-known presence on Pacific Avenue for several years during the 2000s.

Today: Steffen still walks every day, this time along the Wharf and West Cliff Drive, engaging tourists and locals in conversation.

Originally from: Born in Las Vegas, but moved around with his military family to Japan, Texas and California.

Background: Graduated as an electrical engineer from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. Worked as an IT specialist at Ames Research Center in Mountain View, and part time in other capacities.

Free time: He likes to read about scientific advances, and is also a fan of young-adult fiction and fantasy on audiobooks.

His message: 'I want people to live in a brighter, lighter world. And to be free. We are all gray matter in these colorful boxes. We all have brains, that's what unites us. Why are we always making such a distinction about the outer outfit?'

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Ghost Books

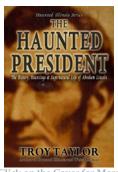
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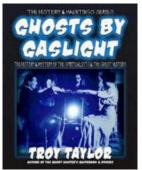


For More About Abraham Lincoln & The Supernatural, see Trov Taylor's entire book on the subject, The Haunted President!



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Exhibits in the **Haunted Museum** are based on the work of Troy Taylor from his book, Ghosts by Gaslight!



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SÉANCES IN THE WHITE HOUSE?

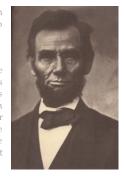
Abraham Lincoln & The Supernatural

One of the most fascinating characters in American history was undoubtedly President Abraham Lincoln. In addition to his many contributions to our history, connections between Lincoln and the supernatural were maintained throughout his life, and some say beyond it. Much has been made of Lincoln's prophetic dreams and of his belief in the spirit world and of course, of the hauntings which are said to be connected to his home in Springfield and his mysterious tomb. Stories have also been told of his belief in the spirit world and for our purposes here, that is what I wish to focus on.

Did séances really take place in the Lincoln White House? Did Lincoln really believe in Spiritualism? And if so, what event occurred that could have caused him to want to make contact with the dead?

Lincoln in Illinois

Abraham Lincoln was always a melancholy person. The death of his mother when he was still a child, hard labor to make an existence for himself in the wilderness and his struggle for an education, all combined to make him a serious man, even when he was making a joke. The Civil War caused him great sorrow and the heavy losses on both sides filled him with sadness. Lincoln paid obsessive detail to everything about the war and by 1864, portraits of him show a face etched with lines. He slept very little in those years and during the five years he lived in the White House, he spent less than one month away from work. His only escape was afforded him by the theater, a late night buggy ride or from his books.



Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky in 1809. His father, Thomas Lincoln, had married Nancy Hanks, a tall, pretty, uneducated girl, three years before and they had built a log cabin at a place called Sinking Springs Farm. Later, the Lincoln family pulled up stakes and moved across the Ohio River to Indiana, where they settled on Little Pigeon Creek. In 1818, Lincoln's life changed abruptly when the family was struck by a terrible frontier disease dubbed "milk sickness". Tom and Betsy Sparrow, close friends of the Lincoln family, died first, while Nancy Lincoln faithfully nursed them to their last hours. Then, Nancy too was struck down with the disease and followed her friends to their graves. Abraham helped to fashion his mother's coffin with his own hands and then placed her in the ground. It was later said that he held his head in his hands and wept for hours. At that point, his father and sister forgotten, Lincoln later said that he felt completely alone in the world.

In 1820, the Lincoln's moved to Illinois. Thomas had re-married and for a time, the family lived in a small cabin outside of Decatur. The younger Lincoln later moved to New Salem and Springfield after working on the riverboats and serving in the military during the Black Hawk War. He began working in a law practice and found that he had a gift for politics and oration. He was soon a popular young man about town. In 1839, Lincoln met a young woman named Mary Todd and after a rocky courtship, they were married in 1842.

Lincoln's love for travel and the law caused his marriage to suffer badly in those early years. At that point in his career, he was active in court cases all over Illinois and was constantly away from home. Mary gave birth to a son, Robert, and their second son, Eddie, was born in 1846 but only lived to the age of four. Willie followed in 1850, not long after the death of his brother, and Thomas "Tad" Lincoln was born in 1853.



Lincoln served a term in Congress in the late 1840's, but his law practice kept him too busy to consider much of a political career. He had always been opposed to the further spread of slavery in the country and was contented that the Missouri Compromise had outlawed slavery further west, where America's future would be built. But in 1854, a congressional act provoked by Lincoln's long-time personal and political rival, Stephen Douglas, threatened to allow slavery in the territories. Lincoln's anger at this got the best of him and he made the decision to return to politics.

Lincoln's Prophetic Vision

In the summer of 1854, Lincoln decided to campaign for a seat in the Illinois State Assembly. He easily won the position, but then quickly resigned. What he really wanted was a seat in the US Senate, where he believed he could really make a difference for his country. In February 1855, he sought but failed to get the coveted seat. Things started to change in early 1856 however, as a new political party was created called the Republican Party. In these years, passions were beginning to

ignite in the nation and dire predictions began to be made about the possibilities of secession and Civil War. In Illinois, Republicans nominated Lincoln to run against Stephen Douglas for a seat in the Senate in 1858.

On July 24, Lincoln proposed that the two opponents meet in a series of debates before audiences all over the state. Douglas agreed and the two began a series of appearances that have become legend in Illinois for their volatile content. "The prairies are on fire," wrote one reporter, after witnessing a clash between Lincoln and Douglas. The debates were bitter and powerful between the two long-time rivals. Lincoln argued that slavery must be abolished, while Douglas insisted that it could be contained and allowed to flourish in the South, as long as the states there wished it. The final debate was held in Alton and the story was reported all over the country in newspapers.

Finally, in November, word reached Lincoln that he had lost the race for the Senate seat. Surprisingly, this loss was the best thing that could have happened to him. Wise political analysts, on both sides, had watched this race very closely and had seen the way the debates had captured the attention of the entire country. Soon, word among the Republicans began to favor Lincoln as their choice for President in 1860.

Lincoln began to travel all over the country, backed by the Illinois Republican contingent, making his name known and becoming a recognizable entity. On May 16, 1860, the Republican National Convention opened in Chicago and ended with a presidential nomination for Lincoln. The city of Springfield had a carnival-like atmosphere about it that summer, highlighted with a Republican rally at the fairgrounds. The parade took more than eight hours to pass the Lincoln home and ended with a picnic, where tubs of lemonade and whole cooked steers awaited the revelers.

Election Day in the city dawned with rousing blasts from a cannon, with music and contagious excitement. Lincoln spent the day and evening with friends at a telegraph office. By midnight, it was clear that he had been elected President of the United States. A late night dinner was held in his honor and then he returned to the office for more news. Guns fired in celebration throughout the night. Lincoln may have won the day, but he fared poorly in the popular vote. He had soundly defeated his closest opponent in the Electoral College, but had won just forty percent of the vote among the people. He had become a minority president with no support at all in the southern states.



Lincoln as he would have looked around the time of his vision in Springfield

Lincoln finally managed to return home in the early morning hours although news of victory and telegrams of congratulations were still being wired to his office. He went into his bedroom for some much-needed rest and collapsed onto a settee. Near the couch was a large bureau with a mirror on it and Lincoln started for a moment at his reflection in the glass. His face appeared angular, thin and tired. Several of his friends suggested that he grow a beard, which would hide the narrowness of his face and give him a more "presidential" appearance. Lincoln pondered this for a moment and then experienced what many would term a "vision"... and odd vision that Lincoln would later believe had prophetic meaning.

He saw that in the mirror, his face appeared to have two separate, yet distinct, images. The tip of one nose was about three inches away from the other one. The vision vanished but appeared again a few moments later. It was clearer this time and Lincoln realized that one of the faces was actually much paler than the other was, almost with the coloring of death. The vision disappeared again and Lincoln dismissed the whole thing to the excitement of the hour and his lack of sleep.

Later on that evening, he told Mary of the strange vision and attempted to conjure it up again in the days that followed. The faces always returned to him and while Mary never saw it, she believed her husband when he said he did. She also believed she knew the significance of the vision. The healthy face was her husband's "real" face and indicated that he would serve his first term as president. The pale, ghostly image of the second face however was a sign that he would be elected to a second term -- but would not live to see its conclusion.

Lincoln apparently dismissed the whole thing as a hallucination, or an imperfection in the glass, or so he said publicly. Later, that strange vision would come back to haunt him during the turbulent days of the war. It was not Lincoln's only brush with prophecy either. One day, shortly before the election, he spoke to some friends as they were discussing the possibilities of Civil War. "Gentlemen," he said to them, "you may be surprised and think it strange, but when the doctor here was describing a war, I distinctly saw myself, in second sight, bearing an important part in that strife."

Lincoln & the War

Lincoln was soon sworn in as President and began one of the most troubled periods of American history. The great loss of life and the bitter turmoil of the war took their toll on him. His personality changed and he became more bitter and dark. He became a sad, gloomy leader who was prone to severe depression. It was as if the weight of the entire nation had fallen on his shoulders.

Documents of the Union War Department contain one occasion when Lincoln burst into the telegraph office of the department late one night. He had visited earlier, looking for the latest news, but when he came back, he was in a panic. He ordered the operator to get a line through to the Union commanders. He was convinced that Confederate soldiers were just about to cut through the Federal lines. The telegraph operator asked where he had obtained such information and Lincoln reportedly answered, "My god, man! I saw it".

The war took a terrible toll on President Lincoln but there is no doubt that the most crippling blow he suffered in the White House was the death of his son, Willie, in 1862. The boy had been born in Springfield in 1850, shortly after the funeral of the Lincoln's second son, Eddie. Willie was much like his father and probably because of this, was the special favorite among his much-loved sons. William Wallace Lincoln, named for a family doctor in Springfield, was a quiet, thoughtful boy who excelled at reading and education. His brother Tad was just the opposite and could not read or write by age 12, while Willie was beyond the basics by 8. He had a wonderful memory and could recite long passages from the Bible with ease. He often told his parents that he was going to be a minister when he grew up.



e tragic figure of Willie Lincoln

Lincoln and Mary grieved deeply over Willie's death. Lincoln was sick at heart over Willie's death and it was probably the most intense personal crisis in his life. Some historians have even called it the greatest blow he ever suffered. Even



Confederate President Jefferson Davis expressed condolences over the boy's death.

Lincoln did not fare well in the days that followed the boy's death. Willie had been embalmed to make the trip back to Springfield and be buried beside his brother, but Lincoln changed his mind about that at the last minute. He accepted an offer made to him by a friend, William Thomas Carroll, to place the body of Willie in one of the crypts in the Carroll family tomb. This would be until Lincoln retired from the presidency and returned to live in Springfield himself. He could not bear the idea of having Willie so far away from him just yet. In fact, Lincoln returned to the cemetery the next day to watch the body as it was moved from the cemetery chapel to the crypt itself. Word got out that Lincoln returned to the tomb on two occasions and had Willie's coffin opened. The doctor had embalmed Willie so perfectly that he everyone said he just seemed to be sleeping. The President claimed that he was forced to look upon his boy's face just one last time.

After the funeral, Lincoln tried to go on about his work, but his spirit had been crushed by Willie's death. One week after the funeral, he closed himself up in his office all day and wept. It has often been said that Lincoln was on the verge of suicide at this point, but none can say for sure. He did withdraw even further into himself though and he began to look more closely at the spiritual matters that had interested him for so long.

Lincoln & The Spiritualists

Although many Lincoln scholars say otherwise, it is more than possible that Abraham Lincoln didn't just believe in the supernatural, but that he actually participated in it. Many have scoffed and said that Lincoln had no time for ghosts and spirits, but there are others who say that he actually attended séances that were held in the White House. Whether he accepted the movement or not, it is a fact that many Spiritualists were often guests there. Several of them were even said to have given him warnings about the dark shadows that hung over his life.

Of course, Lincoln himself was convinced that he was doomed and adopted a very fatalistic attitude during his presidency, especially after Willie's death. His friends stated that Lincoln would often watch the door while he worked, as if expecting the boy to run through it and give his father a hug, as he often did in life. Lincoln also began to speak of how Willie's spirit remained with him and how his presence was often felt in his home and office. Some mediums theorized that Lincoln's obsession with the boy's death may have caused Willie's spirit to linger behind, refusing, for his father's sake, to pass on to the other side.

Regardless of how he felt about Willie's spirit, Lincoln publicly avoided connections to the Washington spiritualists, so much of what is written about his contact with them comes through accounts and diaries written by friends and acquaintances.

While Lincoln avoided the spiritualists in public, Mary embraced them openly. She had been quick to turn to contact with the other side for comfort after Willie's death. Once he was gone, Mary never again entered the White House guest room where he died or the room in which the funeral viewing was held. Some historians claim that this was the beginning of Mary's mental instability, but not because of the mediums, because of her fervent grief instead. The obsession over Spiritualism was just one of the symptoms, but none could ignore the fact that her headaches, mood swings and bursts of irrational temper were growing worse.

Mary began meeting with a number of different Spiritualists and invited many to the White House, as each claimed to be able to "lift the thin veil" and allow Mary to communicate with Willie. Mary's closest spiritualist companion, and one of whom there is some record that Lincoln also met with, was Nettie Colburn Maynard. Many are familiar with a tale told about a séance held by Nettie Maynard in 1863 where a grand piano levitated. The medium was playing the instrument when it began to rise off the floor. Lincoln and Colonel Simon Kase were both present and it is said that both men climbed onto the piano, only to have it jump and shake so hard that they climbed down. It is recorded that Lincoln would later refer to the levitation as proof of an "invisible power."

Rumors spread that Lincoln had an interest in the spirit world. In England, a piece of sheet music was published which portrayed him holding a candle while violins and tambourines flew about his head. The piece of music was called *The Dark Séance Polka* and the caption below the illustration of the president read "Abraham Lincoln and the Spiritualists".

It was also rumored that Lincoln consulted with these mediums and clairvoyants to obtain information about future events in the war. He found that sometimes they gave him information about matters as mundane as Confederate troop movements -- information that sometimes matched his own precognitive visions.





Illustrations from a book in my collection called "Was
Lincoln a Spiritualist?", which was written by

During a séance that was supposed to have been held at the home of a Mrs. Laurie in February 1863, a spirit come through Nettie Maynard who identified himself as Dr. Bamford. Lincoln was allegedly in attendance at this séance and listened as the spirit described the critical conditions of the Federal Army at the front lines. Lincoln replied that the spirit seemed to understand the situation and asked what he would do to remedy it. The spirit answered that he did -- but only if Lincoln had the courage to go through with it. Lincoln said that he did and asked for assistance.

The spirit told Lincoln that he should make an informal visit to the battle front, accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln, and that he should mingle with the men and hear their grievances and stories. This, said the spirit, would unite the men behind him. Lincoln followed his advice and managed to rally the troops behind the cause. By July of that year, the Union was dominating on both the western and eastern fronts with victories in Vicksburg and Gettysburg. The following of the spirit's advice was credited by many for beginning the turning point of the war.

The Foreshadowing of Doom

Despite these somewhat apocryphal stories, there is little doubt that Lincoln believed a dark cloud hung over his head. The constant threats of death and violence that he received kept he and his bodyguards on edge at all times. It is also believed that some of his spiritualist friends felt the end was near. During a session that he was said to have had with Nettie Maynard, she allegedly told him that "the shadows others have told of still hang over you." Lincoln told her that he received letters from spiritualists all over the country that warned him of impending doom. When she got ready to depart, the president insisted that she come and visit he and Mary the following autumn. "I shall come, of course," Nettie answered, "that is... if you are still among us."

Perhaps the most famous supernatural incident connected to Lincoln would be his last prophetic dream of the assassination

One of Lincoln's old friends from Illinois was a lawyer with whom he had ridden the legal circuit named Ward Hill Lamon. Lincoln had appointed him to a security position in the White House and he worried constantly over Lincoln's seeming indifference to threats and warnings of death. Lamon often resigned his position because his friend did not take the danger seriously. Lincoln always convinced him to stay on, promising to be more careful.... as he vanished out of the White House at night, or attended the theater without protection.

Lamon became obsessed with watching over Lincoln and many believe that the president would not have been killed at Ford's Theater had Lamon been on duty that night. As it turned out, the security chief happened to be in Richmond, Virginia, on an errand for the president, when disaster struck. He would never forgive himself for what happened — especially since he believed that he had a forewarning of the event, from Lincoln himself.

Years later, Lamon would remember that Lincoln had always been haunted by the strange vision that he experienced in the mirror in 1860. Several years after that, it was to Lamon and Mary Lincoln to whom the president would recount an eerie dream of death, just shortly before his assassination.

"About ten days ago, I retired late. I soon began to dream. There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along.

"It was light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me, but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully.

- " 'Who is dead in the White House?', I demanded of one of the soldiers.
- " 'The President', was his answer, 'He was killed by an assassin.'
- "Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which awoke me from my dream. I slept no more that night; and although it was only a dream, I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since."

Lincoln was murdered just a few days later and his body was displayed in the East Room of the White House. Mary would recall this dream of her husband's quite vividly in the days that followed. It was said that her first coherent word after the assassination was a muttered statement about his dream being prophetic.

On April 14, 1865, a few days after the horrifying dream and on the night he was to attend Ford's Theater, Lincoln called a meeting of his cabinet. Edwin Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War, arrived twenty minutes late and the meeting began without him. As Stanton and Attorney General James Speed were leaving the meeting, Stanton commented to him that he was pleased about how much work was accomplished.

"But you were not here at the beginning", Speed said. "When we entered the council chamber, we found the president seated at the top of the table, with his face buried in his hands. Presently, he raised it and we saw that he looked grave and worn".

" Gentlemen, before long, you will have important news", the President told them. The Cabinet members were anxious to hear what news Lincoln spoke of, but he refused to tell them anything further.



"I have heard nothing, but you will hear tomorrow, "he said, and then continued, "I have had a dream. I have dreamed three times before; once before the Battle of Bull Run; once on another occasion; and again last night. I am in a boat, alone on a boundless ocean. I have no oars, no rudder, I am helpless. I drift!"

That evening, while attending a performance of a play called *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater, Lincoln was killed by an assassin named John Wilkes Booth. He died the next morning, April 15, the anniversary of the southern assault on Fort Sumter, the event which officially started the Civil War.

Lincoln spoke of death and prophecies to other members of his staff also, like Colonel William H. Crook, a member of the White House security team and one of Lincoln's personal bodyguards. Crook took his task seriously, often staying awake at night and sitting outside Lincoln's bedroom while the president slept. Crook even refused to read a newspaper while on duty so that he would be ready should an emergency arise.



Crook was on duty the evening of April 14 and that same afternoon, Lincoln spoke to him about the strange dreams that he had been having. Crook pleaded with the president not to go to the theater that night, but Lincoln dismissed his concerns, explaining that he had promised Mary they would go and that he needed a night away from the problems of the country. Crook then asked to accompany the president, but Lincoln again refused, insisting that Crook could not work around the clock.

Lincoln had a habit of bidding Crook a "good night" each evening as he left the office and went to his bedroom. On that fateful day, according to Crook, Lincoln paused as he left for the theater and turned to the bodyguard. "Good-bye, Crook," he said significantly.

"It was the first time that he neglected to say 'Good Night' to me", Crook would later recall. "And it was the only time that he ever said 'Good-bye'. I thought of it at that moment and, a few hours later, when the news flashed over Washington that he had been shot, his last words were so burned into my being that they can never be forgotten."

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Actress falsely accused elderly neighbour of having sex with her pig metro.co.uk

Ashitha Nagesh for Metro.co.ukFriday 18 Nov 2016 4:11 pm



She claimed her neighbour had sex with her pig, not pictured (Picture: Getty Images)

An actress is facing a massive £230,000 bill after falsely accusing her neighbour of luring one of her pigs over with doughnuts and having sex with it.

Sharon Hamilton, a 54-year-old actor who appeared in TV series Doc Martin, made the astonishing claim about her 73-year-old neighbour Anton Barkhuysen in the midst of an eight-year land dispute.

It led to the pensioner being arrested on New Year's Day in 2013 and put through a 'humiliating' police investigation, which involved probing questions about his sex life and 'intimate sampling'.

Barkhuysen, who is married and lives in Tregolls in Cornwall, was ultimately cleared of the bizarre offence and has been awarded £32,080 for false imprisonment, harassment and slander by Mr Justice Warby.



Sharon Hamilton acted in Doc Martin

The payout, however, is tiny compared to the immense legal costs Hamilton will have to pay – around £200,000.

Justice Warby told the High Court that the allegations, which were also made to other villagers and a steward at the church Barkhuysen attended, amounted to slander. She also told people to watch their children around him.

'Allegations of sexual offending against animals and against children are at the upper end of the scale of gravity,' he said. 'The pig allegation is not just improbable. Having heard all the evidence and argument, I am convinced that it is false. It was an invention by the defendant.'

Anton Barkhuysen was put through a 'humiliating' investigation

Barkhuysen said he had had 'five years of hell' because of his disputes with Hamilton.

'She had me arrested for having sexual intercourse with a pig, which was a complete pack of lies,' he said. 'The pig allegation is disgusting. I am well known in the village and it is horrifying to think about what people thought.

'She even followed me into church to make that vile sexual allegation. My friends and family knew it wasn't true but not everyone did. It could have cast doubt in people's minds.'



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Shoppers flee and take refuge in their cars after angry goat terrorises shop

By Kara O'Neill 14:41, 5 DEC 2016 Updated 16:30, 5 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

The grumpy animal charged at a 70-year-old customer who managed to escape injury when the shop manager dragged him into the store



Shoppers were forced to flee and take refuge in their cars after an angry goat terrorised a store - and even attacked a pensioner.

The grumpy animal began its reign of terror by pressing its face up against the glass shop front, before turning its attention to innocent customers.

According to reports, the creature was loose for half an hour outside a Eurospar in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland and forced shoppers and staff members to take cover.

The store's managed Jonathan Smyth, told Mirror.co.uk: "It's just something you didn't expect.

"I turned around and there was a goat with this big eyes starring right at me.

"He held eye contact for about 30 seconds."

Jonathan described how the animal stared at him before running around the car park and eating all the baskets of plants left outside the shop.

He added: "We have a pensioner named Billy who shops here and it charged at him and I grabbed him and dragged him through the door just in time before the goat crashed into the door.

"Billy was being attacked by a billy goat!"

Jonathan went on to explain that another woman waiting outside in the car park had got back in her vehicle after spotting the angry animal.

And as members of staff began to arrive for their shift, the goat charged at them, forcing them to jump in the woman's car for safety.

At which point, the menacing goat then jumped up on its hind legs on the side of the vehicle.

Eventually the goat was captured by a passer-by who grabbed it by the horns and walked it away.

But despite his ordeal, Jonathan admits that he's already looking back on the incident and laughing.

He told the Carrickfergus Times: "It was great, it made my day. When I saw it I burst into stitches."

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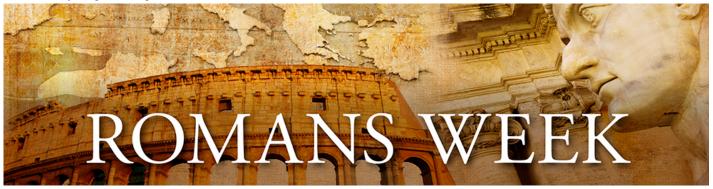
Silbannacus: the Roman emperor that time forgot

Wednesday 16th November 2016

historyextra.com



During the 1930s, British Museum curators came across a baffling discovery – a Roman coin depicting an enigmatic emperor whose identity was entirely



unknown. Professor Kevin Butcher examines the mystery of the Roman emperor lost to history...



In 1937, the British Museum acquired a mysterious Roman coin from a Swiss coin dealer. Made of debased silver, and about the size of a modern British 10 pence, it bore the name and portrait of an emperor completely unknown to history.

The portrait on the mystery coin showed a young man, and the inscription around his head read *IMP MAR SILBANNACVS AVG*, or 'Emperor Mar(cius?) Silbannacus Augustus'. According to the Swiss dealer, the coin had been found in Lorraine, the north-eastern

region of France close to the river Rhine.

The specialists at the British Museum found no reason to doubt the authenticity of the coin, which resembled products minted at Rome during the same period. But who was Silbannacus? And when did he reign?

The emperor's name was as mysterious as his coin. No historical source, document or inscription mentions an emperor, or even a usurper, with a name resembling Silbannacus. Even the name itself is unusual – it is perhaps a misspelling of Silvannacus or Silvaniacus, which might possibly indicate northern Italian origins. Furthermore, nobody is sure what the abbreviated name *MAR* stands for: maybe a Roman family name such as Marius or Marcius. Yet there are no references in the historical sources to any usurper or prominent military personality of the mid-third century called Marius, Marcius, Silvannacus or Silvaniacus.

Nor did the reverse of the coin (or the 'tails' side) provide any pointers. There were no obvious parallels among the coins of other mid-third century emperors with which to compare the design on the unique coin of Silbannacus. Instead, the design depicted a figure of the god Mercury, a deity found only infrequently on Roman imperial coins before the later third century AD.

The only clues to Silbannacus's mysterious coin lay in the place where it was said to have been found and the type of coin it was. The coin was of a kind current in the middle of the third century AD (between around 238 and 260), a period for which there are few reliable historical accounts. This was a time of political turmoil in the Roman empire – a violent age of barbarian invasions and civil wars, as rival army commanders fought for supreme power.

So it was suggested that Silbannacus could have been a usurper, perhaps someone who had gained control of the Roman armies on the Rhine, and managed to produce a few coins in the region before some catastrophe overtook him. A rough date was proposed – the reign of the emperor Philip, who ruled from AD 244 to 249. During this period there had been numerous usurpers, some of whom minted coins. The enigmatic Silbannacus was therefore suspected to be one of several unsuccessful usurpers during Philip's reign. It was an educated guess, but no more.



Portrait bust of the Roman emperor Philip. (The Art Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images)

For several decades the British Museum coin was the only known example of currency minted by Silbannacus. Then, about 40 years ago, another coin was found somewhere in the vicinity of Paris, where it entered a private collection. The existence of this second coin was not generally known until 1996, when it was published by a French specialist. It had a different design on the reverse, showing the god Mars. This design copied one used by another emperor of the period, called Aemilian, who reigned for a mere three months in AD 253. On the basis of this evidence, it seemed likely that Silbannacus should be dated

slightly later than the time of Philip. Was it possible that Silbannacus was a usurper in AD 253, at the time of the short-lived emperor Aemilian?

The year AD 253 is a particularly obscure one in Roman history, because there are very few reliable sources that cover it. At the beginning of this year, the legitimate emperor was Trebonianus Gallus, who had reigned since AD 251. Aemilian was then a commander in control of Roman armies on the Danube, and in the summer of AD 253 his soldiers won a victory over the Gothic barbarians in the area. In jubilation, the troops proclaimed their commander emperor. When he heard of this, Trebonianus Gallus ordered another provincial army commander, Valerian, to march against the usurping Aemilian. But it was too late – Aemilian quickly invaded Italy and Trebonianus Gallus was overthrown.

The victorious Aemilian reached Rome and became the legitimate emperor of the Roman world. On the coinage, his portrait replaced that of Trebonianus Gallus. Yet within weeks of gaining supreme power Aemilian faced a rebellion. Valerian's armies, having failed to act in support of Trebonianus Gallus, now proclaimed *their* commander emperor. Aemilian left Rome to confront Valerian but was assassinated by his own soldiers.

Emperor Valerian. (Prisma/UIG via Getty Images)



It is possible that Silbannacus belongs to this murky episode in Roman history. Specialists have noted that the style of his coin is very similar to those minted at Rome. It may be the case that Silbannacus' coinage was indeed minted in the capital, and that he briefly gained control there during the period of conflict between Aemilian and Valerian. Perhaps he was one of Aemilian's officers who, after Aemilian's murder, tried to secure the city of Rome against Valerian. If he did, he was unsuccessful: Valerian swiftly gained control of the capital and became the legitimate emperor.

Whatever the case, Silbannacus' coinage must have been of very short duration, and we may suppose that he reigned for no more than a few days at most. But of his life and death we know nothing whatsoever. He

was an insignificant figure in a turbulent age – so much so that history has forgotten him entirely, and only two coins survive to bear witness to his very existence.

Professor Kevin Butcher from the University of Warwick is the co-author of *The Metallurgy of Roman Silver Coinage: From the Reform of Nero to the Reform of Trajan*, (Cambridge University Press, 2014). His research interests include Greek and Roman coinage, particularly the civic and provincial coinages of the Roman empire, and the Hellenistic and Roman Near East, particularly coastal Syria and Lebanon.

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Son stabs dad after father wanted to give the 20-year-old a home circumcision

By Patrick Lion 16:51, 26 NOV 2016 Updated 19:36, 26 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Fultz told police he was angry because his father wanted to cut the foreskin on Fultz's penis, according to a police report



A man allegedly stabbed his dad in the neck after learning that his father wanted to conduct a home circumcision on him - at the age of 20.

Alex Fultz was arrested on a charge of attempted felony murder.

Fultz told police he was angry because his father wanted to cut the foreskin on Fultz's penis, according to a police report.

The parent wanted to take his son to a urologist.

Alex Fultz has been has been charged with attempted felony murder urologist. after stabbing his father asleep on a sofa

Fultz's father was said to be asleep on a sofa in his bedroom when Fultz entered the room with a knife and stabbed his father in the neck.

Police said Fultz, of South Florida, USA, then dropped the knife and left while the father was flown to Jackson South Community Hospital, Local 10 reports.

Police said officers later saw Fultz walking towards them with both of his hands raised in the air, according to the broadcaster.

"Don't shoot. Don't shoot," Fultz told the officers, the police report said.

"I'm the one who stabbed my dad."

Fultz has been diagnosed as schizophrenic, bipolar and autistic, police said and was being held without bond at the Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center.

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Spanish sailors were actually first to celebrate Thanksgiving

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The Local



Spanish sailors were actually first to celebrate Thanksgiving

Jessica Jones · 24 Nov 2016, 09:46

Published: 24 Nov 2016 09:46

GMT+01:00

Sticklers for tradition should really abandon the turkey and pumpkin pie, and instead celebrate with jamón washed down with Rioja, as historical research reveals Spanish sailors created the first Thanksgiving dinner.

As people all over the United States

get ready to carve the turkey and remember the pilgrims who sat down for Thanksgiving in 1621 they may be surprised to learn that they are in fact celebrating the wrong date entirely.

The history books tell us that the first Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621 by English pilgrims who had arrived in America on the Mayflower.

But archaeologists at Florida's Museum of Natural History have revealed that the first Thanksgiving was actually celebrated in St. Augustine, Florida over 50 years earlier in 1565.

And it was not the English pilgrims in their wide-brimmed hats who celebrated the first Thanksgiving, but Spanish explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and 800 soldiers, sailors and settlers.

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. Photo: Georgetown University Creative Commons / Wikimedia

They attended a special thanksgiving mass before sitting down together with local Native Americans for a thanksgiving feast, according to Kathleen Deagan, research curator emerita of historical archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

And far from the traditional turkey, the first Thanksgiving feast included salted pork and typical Spanish products such as red wine, olives and chickpeas.

While there might not have been a cranberry in sight, the first Thanksgiving feast may have included some typical Caribbean foods that Menéndez picked up when he stopped in Puerto Rico before landing in Florida.



The local Timucuan people may have also contributed to the feast, bringing "corn, fresh fish, berries or beans," according to Deagan.

The first Thanksgiving feast probably took place along the banks of the Matanzas River, the site of the first Spanish colony in the United States.

Menéndez de Avilés had lost half his fleet on the voyage from Spain, and one of the first things he did on reaching the "New World" was to organize a mass of thanksgiving, followed by a feast.

"He invited all the local native people who were so curious about them," said Deagan.

But how has this important part of US history been forgotten?

In part, it is because over the centuries the history of the United States has been heavily Anglicized, with America's origins viewed as primarily British.

"The fact is, the first colony was a melting pot and the cultural interactions of the many groups of people in the colony were much more like the US is today than the British colonies ever were," Gifford Waters, historical archaeology collection manager at the Florida Museum, told the University of Florida news.

"I think the true story of the first Thanksgiving is especially important, since there is a growing Hispanic population in the U.S. and the role of the Spanish colony in La Florida is often neglected in the classroom," he added.

St Augustine is the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the United States, and in 2015 is celebrating its 450th anniversary - it was founded by Menédez de Avilés on September 8th 1565.

The royals stand with an actor dressed as Pedro de Menéndez de Avilés in St Augustine. Photo: AFP

A version of this article first appeared in November, 2015.

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Alaska Dispatch News

Saturday, November 19, 2016

• Author: Suzanna Caldwell



At 1:31 p.m. Friday the sun set in Barrow for the last time. Ever.

Or at least, it set for the last time while the city is named Barrow. The sun won't rise again until 1:17 p.m. Jan. 22, 2017, when the city will be operating under its new name, Utqiagvik.

The name change will take effect Dec. 1. In October, residents of Barrow voted narrowly in favor of changing the name. Utqiagʻvik is an Inupiaq word that means a place for gathering

wild roots. It has long been used to describe the greater Barrow community.

[Related: Barrow's new name is its old one, Utqiagvik. Local Iñupiaq leaders hope its use heals as it teaches.]

Until Jan. 22, the nation's northernmost city won't get more than a few hours of twilight each day, when the sun rise won't clear the horizon.

Qaiyaan Harcharek, the Barrow City Council member who sponsored the ordinance to change the name, said he didn't think much of the fact that it was the last official sunset while the city was still "Barrow." He said in a phone interview Friday that he's always thought of the city as Utqiagʻvik anyway.

Plus, there were overcast skies with some snow flurries Friday afternoon. The sun was nowhere to be seen.

"So no, I didn't put much thought to it," Harcharek said.

Comments

Fred Agree

The town of BARROW was founded by a Jew from New York called CHARLES BROWER.

JPZ

Uh, no.

Habitation there dates back to around 500 AD. Whoever may have 'founded' the town was not from New York and was not Jewish.

What we used to call Barrow did not spring up out of nowhere, it's been there for ages. In the recent past, the town was given the name Barrow in honor of Sir John Barrow, born in the town of Ulverston, located in Cumbria an area in England. The Barrow Strait and Point Barrow were also named in honor of Sir John Barrow.

Residents of Ugiagvik, as it's recently been renamed or Ukpeagviak as it's also been known in the past, are going to see the sun set for the rest of this winter but it's not the last time the sun will set there.

fishbear

Oops! Sun sets in Utqiagvik (oot-kay-ahg-vik) for the last time Friday!

Joy-Lyn Gulley

Thank you. That was the most important thing the article was missing. The pronunciation!

Ella Hyland

In reply to:

Oops! Sun sets in Utgiagvik (oot-kay-ahg-vik) for the last time Friday!

- fishbear

Thanks. The pronunciation was the only reason I clicked on the article.

Joe Smith 543

It should read "sun sets for the last time ever on Barrow, AK." It will rise again next year over a town reclaiming its former name.

Donald Zanoff Share conversation

Ellis Patkotak

Don't forget report the thousands of other cities all around the world that are at this latitude! What a big deal as usual and the retarded media that reports it! Hahaha

JPZ5 hours ago

...retarded means to slow down, delay, hold up, hold back, set back, detain, put back, postpone, decelerate, hinder, hamper, obstruct. inhibit, check, restrain, restrict, impede, or even trammel.

Donald Zanoff Share conversation

Bryan Koeff

I spent too many years in Alaska. So glad to be away from the ice...

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Superheroes And The F-Word: Grappling With The Ugly Truth Under The Capes

2016-11-16 npr.org



Superheroes And The F-Word: Grappling With The Ugly Truth Under The Capes

November 16, 20169:39 AM ET



yogysic/Getty Images yogysic/Getty Images

Superheroes are democratic ideals.

They exist to express what's noblest about us: selflessness, sacrifice, a commitment to protect those who need protection, and to empower the powerless.

Superheroes are fascist ideals.

They exist to symbolize the notion that might equals right, that a select few should dictate the fate of the world, and that the status quo is to be protected at all costs.

Both of these things are true, and inextricably

bound up with one another — but they weren't always.



Truth, Jawlines And The American Way: The Changing Face Of Superman

Monkey See

Truth, Jawlines And The American Way: The Changing **Face Of Superman**

When he debuted in 1938, Superman was, briefly, a progressive icon. He sprang, after all, from the minds of two Jewish kids in Cleveland warily watching the rise of Hitler in Europe. In his first year of life, they sent their "Champion of the Oppressed" (his very first nickname, years before "Man of Steel") after corrupt Senators, war-mongering foreign leaders, weapons merchants, and crooked stockbrokers. He purposefully razed a slum to force the city government to provide better low-income housing. (He also launched one-man crusades against slot machines, reckless drivers, and cheating

college football teams, which ... yeah. Guy kept busy.)

Both Captain America and Wonder Woman were created expressly to fight the Nazi threat. Literally, to fight it — to punch it right in its dumb Ratzi face.

Batman, on the other hand, spent much of his first year protecting only his city's wealthy elite from murder plots, jewel thieves and extortion. (Also werewolves and madmen with Napoleon complexes piloting death-blimps. Comics, guys!) It took him a while to turn his attention to the kind of petty crime that afflicted the common citizen — the arrival of Robin the Boy Wonder helped him focus.

Article continues after sponsorship

But with the advent of World War II, Superman, Batman and other costumed heroes found themselves conscripted alongside Captain America. Not to fight the Axis themselves, mind you, but to root out stateside saboteurs and urge readers to plant Victory gardens and buy war bonds.

In the process, the visual iconography of superheroes — which, comics being comics, is 50% of the formula, remember — melded with that of patriotic imagery. This continued for decades after the war, as once-progressive heroes like Superman came to symbolize bedrock Eisenhower-era American values — the American Way — in addition to notions of Truth and Justice.

The Wertham Era



'Caped Crusade' Peeks Under Batman's Iconic Cowl

Book Reviews

'Caped Crusade' Peeks Under Batman's Iconic Cowl

Yet there was always something about superheroes, and Superman in particular. He'd helped inspire the country to defeat fascism, but he looked like he did — the kind of idealized male musculature the Nazis fetishized — and he possessed "powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men." What's more, he used said powers and abilities against those comparatively weak and frail mortal men, if they stepped out of line. He also came from an advanced planet peopled by a and *here's* a pesky phrase that kept cropping up in Superman comics — "super-race."

It wasn't intended, but it was there. People noticed.

One person in particular: Dr. Fredric Wertham, who in his 1954 anti-comics screed Seduction of the Innocent, noted that Superman's whole schtick was hurting criminals without getting hurt himself, and dubbed him an "un-American fascist" symbol. It hit a nerve.

Wertham's crusade changed the industry completely, effectively ending crime and horror comics and shuttering many comics publishers, but the changes to superhero comics — and their fascist overtones — proved more subtle. Suddenly Superman's powers didn't derive from his "super-race" genetics, but from science: the rays of Earth's yellow sun, to be specific. But Batman, who'd been deputized by Gotham's Police Department as early as 1941, grew even chummier with the cops; most stories now began with an urgent plea for help from a worrisomely hapless Commissioner Gordon.

The Marvel Era

Wertham's concerns about the fascistic elements in superhero comics were about themes and implications, not actual text. Because at the time, kids were the primary audience for comics, which presented stark, simple morality plays — light versus darkness, good versus evil. More abstract qualities like characterization, psychology and any overtly political context simply never showed up in a given comic.

That changed when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby introduced the Fantastic Four in 1961 and, especially, when Lee and Ditko created Spider-Man in 1962. The men recognized that a demographic shift was underway — older teenagers and adults were now buying comics. So Lee, Ditko and Kirby created a roster of heroes whose troubled lives reflected those of their readership: conflicted, guarrelsome and deeply insecure.



Comic book creator Stan Lee in the Marvel Super Heroes Science Exhibition at the California Science Center in Los Angeles in 2006. Damian Dovarganes/AP hide caption

Damian Dovarganes/AP

And with the words "With great power comes great responsibility" (Amazing Fantasy #15, August 1962), Lee introduced a concept that greatly mitigated, for Spider-Man at any rate, the fascism baked-in to the superhero genre: sacrifice.

Previously, superheroes had paid lip-service to the notion of selflessness. The altruism they exhibited was reflexive and unquestioned, a part of the narrative infrastructure as essential to the genre as colored underpants. This was because that altruism hadn't needed to be questioned, as superhero stories were still simple stories to reassure children that good always triumphed over evil.

The fact that their tremendous powers and abilities shielded superheroes — often literally — from experiencing any lasting harm also served to undermine their status as truly heroic.

Lee and his co-creators cut against that tendency by showing Peter Parker really suffering before, during and after his decision to be Spider-Man. Soon, Marvel comics teemed with mopey, hot-headed, angst-ridden heroes whose powers and abilities only served to complicate their lives, and deepen their baseline misery.

It took DC heroes like Superman and Batman a while to catch on to this trend, but when they did, they doubled down on it. Superman entered an era in which he lost and gained his powers with metronomic regularity, and Batman became a tortured obsessive.

Super-Fascism As Plot Point

In the 1980s and afterward, as superhero comics shed their child readership and turned in on themselves to cater exclusively to teens and adults, the dawning of the "grim-and-gritty" era meant that the fascism latent in the superhero genre became one of its chief storylines. In books like Watchmen, The Dark Knight Returns, Kingdom Come, Empire, Civil War and many others, creators explicitly grappled with how heroes exert their will when their penchant for benign intervention becomes ... less-than-benign. In monthly comics and one-shot tales set in alternative universes, scores of superheroes became dictators (often for "the greater good") and crushed any insurrection that would upset their status quo.

Movie Reviews

'Steel' Trap: Snyder's Superman, Between Worlds



Steel' Trap: Snyder's Superman, Between Worlds

Both this year's Batman v. Superman and Captain America: Civil War revolve around a non-powered billionaire attempting to rein in a rogue superhuman, and both engage in the by-now inevitable chin-stroking about freedom and government control.

Today, fascism has more potential tools in its arsenal than ever, and the cinematic superhero glut we now find ourselves in reflects that: again and again, these movies offer symbolic, dark-mirror reflections of the surveillance state.

A Changing Superhero Landscape

Although conceived in a progressive spirit, the superhero genre's central narrative has always been one of defending the status quo through overpowering might; in the vast majority of

those cases, the one doing all that defending and overpowering is a straight white male. (This is just one of the reasons that the superhero genre, which has a knack for distilling American culture to its essence, can get a little on-the-nose, sometimes.)

More often than not, the straight white male in question has a square jaw and killer abs and holds vast amount of power but chooses not to use it to subjugate others, simply because he's a Good Person.

Which is to say: historically, the genre's organizing principle is that the only thing keeping fascism from happening is that straight white dudes are chill.

But slowly, incrementally, as comics (and movies, and tv shows, and games, t-shirts and coffee mugs) start to fill up with more characters like Ms. Marvel (a Pakistani-American teenage girl from Jersey City), the visual iconography of superheroes, and what those superheroes mean to the culture, will force the genre to do something it has historically resisted.

It will change.

And once superheroes look different, and once the world on the comics page more closely resembles the world off of it, you will still be able to discern the low but steady drumbeat of fascism that the genre has never been able to escape.

But it will grow lower, and less steady.

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Suspected Prostitute Busted After Demanding \$50 And Nachos From Undercover Cop

cbslocal.com

CBS Local Rewards

Suspected Prostitute Busted After Demanding \$50 And Nachos From Undercover Cop

November 17, 2016 11:16 AM Filed Under: Christy Strawser

BEAVER TWP (CBS Detroit) Police in this rural village near Youngstown, Ohio, busted a suspected prostitute and her male companion during a sting after she advertised sexual services on backpage.com.

An undercover officer responded and arranged a rendezvous. The prostitute demanded that he bring \$50 and some nachos.

"The ad didn't say she wanted nachos, but it came up in their negotiations," Beaver Twp. Officer James L. Cardelein said. "I don't know how it came up, just somehow or another it worked its way into the conversation."

Sadly, when the cop showed up to bust her, he didn't bring any nachos.

"He was telling me when they did meet, naturally they have to banter and she asked three or four times where her nachos were," Cardelein said.

The woman, Crystal Hotlosz, 36, was arrested and charged with solicitation and possession of criminal tools. She had a driver with her, identified as Mark Robbins, who was charged with promoting prostitution.

At some point in the negotiation, Hotlosz allegedly drove up the price to \$60 and said he would have to bring a vehicle for their exchange since she was having a ride bring her to their appointed location.

Police said Hotlosz walked up to the officer's car and asked if he was her "date." They talked about nachos, and she was arrested. She and her companion were lodged in Mahoning County Jail.

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Swedish Christmas goat burns on 50th anniversary

Swedish Christmas goat burns on 50th anniversary

Ap Associated PressNovember 27, 2016



A traditional Christmas goat is unveiled in Gavle, Sweden, Sunday, Nov. 27, 2016. Sweden's Christmas Goat - a giant decorative goat made of straw and wood - is celebrating its 50th birthday, but revelers are being asked to keep the candles away. Every Christmas season since 1966, the city of Gavle in central Sweden builds a giant version of the straw goat, an ancient Scandinavian Yuletide character that precedes Santa Claus as a bringer of gifts, but it also attracts arsonists and seldom survives the season

without someone trying to burn it down. To improve its odds this year, the goat set up on Sunday was equipped with closed-circuit TV. (Pernilla Wahlman/TT News Agency via AP)

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Sweden's Christmas Goat — a giant decorative goat made of straw and wood — didn't last long on its 50th anniversary.

The straw goat, an annual Yuletide tradition in the city of Gavle since 1966, went up in flames just hours after it was inaugurated on Sunday.

Arsonists just cannot stay away from the giant decoration, which seldom survives the season without someone trying to burn it down.

The local newspaper Gefle Dagblad said it was set on fire late Sunday.

A webcam run by the local tourist office showed the frame of the goat was still standing but all the straw was gone.

There was no immediate word on possible suspects.

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Real life Stranger Things as murdered teen 'identifies' killer using LIGHTBULBS

By DAVID RALEIGH 18:38, 18 NOV 2016 Updated 18:39, 18 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Alan Hannan says his son Jeffrey makes the lights in his house flick once for yes and twice for no



Alan Hannon lighting a candle for his son Jeffrey (Photo: Brian Gavin/Press 22) A file photo of Jeffrey Hannon, who was murdered in November 2007 (Photo: Brian Gavin/Press 22) Alan Hannan says his son Jeffrey has been trying to contact the family using lightbulbs, just like (Photo: Youtube/light bolt joe) Winona Ryder as mum Joyce Byers in Stranger Things (Photo: Youtube/Danielle Falou)

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A devastated dad claims his family has experienced a real-life Stranger Things phenomenon - after his murdered teenage son allegedly sent messages to them from beyond the grave.

Alan Hannan says his son Jeffrey, who was hacked to death with an axe nine years ago this month, has been trying to contact the family using lightbulbs.

The 19-year-old's body was left in a field close to his parents former home in Southill, Limerick, on November 22, 2007.

Now, on the ninth anniversary of his son's killing, Alan Hannan told the Irish Mirror: "Jeffrey is in the house with us, he's trying to tell us something."

"He's communicating with us through the lightbulbs. We ask him a question, and then ask him to flick the lights once for 'yes' and twice for 'no'."



murdered in November 2007

"He's taking the energy from the bulb to tell us something."

"We ask him about the investigation into his murder, and if there is anything happening with the case, and, if there is, to flick the light once for 'yes', and he does," Mr Hannan said.

"We believe we know who killed Jeffrey, and whenever that person's name is mentioned, the lights flick once."

The eerie activity mirrors that of hit Netflix show Stranger Things, where lightbulbs are used by a young boy to communicate with his mother from another dimension.

A file photo of Jeffrey Hannon who was Mr Hannan explained other strange incidents have occurred in the family home.

He said: "We know for sure he is there all the time. There have been strange things happening... glasses shattering on top of the mantelpiece and other stuff.

"The first weird thing that started happening is that Jeffrey's camera would flash automatically. There's nothing in it, no battery or anything, and it flashes."

Mr Hannan said his family are comforted by the strange link to Jeffrey. He also dismissed suggestions the strange phenomenon was the result of faulty electrical wiring in his home.

"If it was loose wiring, the trip switch would go. The only place it happens is the sitting room and upstairs. I know it sounds weird, but this is happening," he said.



Alphabet Wall - Stranger Things

want justice for my daddy," she said.

11/18/2016

He added: "We ask Jeffrey about the case, is there anything happening with it, and is it getting anywhere near. He says 'yes' by flicking the lights once."

The 52-year old labourer who has another son, Alan jnr, 23, and a daughter Emily, 31, continued: "He communicates about other stuff too."

Last year, Jeffrey's eldest daughter Nikita, 10, with her family's permission, made an emotional appeal for help in bringing her father's killer to justice. "I

Directly addressing the perpetrator, brave Nikita, who lives with her grandfather, continued: "Step forward and tell [gardaí] what you have done."

"I didn't want to make my Communion without my dad. It was a heartbreaking day. I really, really miss him. It's just heartbreaking that I have no dad," she poignantly added.

Last May, Jeffrey's eight-year old daughter Tianna, made her Communion. Dressed in her white dress, she made the grim journey to her dad's grave to kiss his headstone on the day he should have been celebrating her big day.

Jeffrey Hannan had no involvement in crime. Garda sources say they need further evidence to charge the main suspect. They also believe there were many witnesses to the brutal killing.

Today, Alan Hannan lit candles for his son at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Speaking afterwards, he said Jeffrey was still keeping an eye on his beloved young daughters.

"Nikita asks Jeffrey questions and he's answering her back through the lightbulb. She was a bit naughty last night and the lightbulb just went off completely. Then, after it came back on, Nikita said 'if you're there Daddy, do it again', and the light immediately went off again."

"Nikita was at home the other night saying how she wished her father was here for Christmas and the light switched off straight away. We know he is there with us and he is communicating with us."

With no update in the investigation into Jeffrey's murder, Alan who has waged a nine year campaign for justice for his son, appealed again for for anyone with information to contact gardai.



Lights in Stranger Things

doing. Jeffrey's murder has hit him hard."

Mr Hannan said he had not given up hope.

"It's nine years. The gardai say the case is still open. If anybody can help us please ring the gardai or contact me. All information will be treated confidentially," he added.

The father of three said his family was dealt another hammer blow recently after his son Alan jnr was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

"It's another thing to worry about. He's taking medication now which is helping him sleep at night which he hadn't been

Reiterating his appeal for witnesses to go to the gardai, he said: "Please end our nine year nightmare. Please help."

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UK teenager wins battle to have body cryogenically frozen

By Laura Smith-Spark, CNN

Updated 2:39 PM ET, Fri November 18, 2016



Teen frozen to cure cancer in future 02:58

Story highlights

The 14-year-old wanted her body to be frozen in case her cancer could be cured in the future

The Cryonics Institute in Michigan says it received the body of a girl from London

frozen.

London (CNN) — A British teenager who died of cancer has been cryogenically frozen in the United States after winning a court case before her death.

The girl -- who can't be identified and is referred to only as "JS" -- suffered from a rare form of cancer and expressed a hope to be brought back to life and cured in the future.

She died on October 17 but details of the case at London's High Court were not allowed to be made public until now.

In his judgment, obtained by CNN, Mr. Justice Peter Jackson said the girl had expressed her desire to be cryogenically

She wrote: "I have been asked to explain why I want this unusual thing done. I'm only 14 years old and I don't want to die, but I know I am going to. I think being cryo-preserved gives me a chance to be cured and woken up, even in



Related Article: What is cryogenic preservation?

hundreds of years' time. I don't want to be buried underground.

"I want to live and live longer and I think that in the future they might find a cure for my cancer and wake me up. I want to have this chance. This is my wish."

According to the judgment, the girl's parents are divorced and their relationship is "very bad." Her mother was supportive of her wish, but her father -- who had not seen his daughter face-to-face since 2008 -- initially was not.

READ MORE: What is cryopreservation?

'Bright, intelligent' girl

At the start of proceedings, the teenager's father, who also has cancer, wrote: "Even if the treatment is successful and [JS] is brought back to life in let's say 200 years, she may not find any relative and she might not remember things and she may be left in a desperate situation given that she is only 14 years old and will be in the United States of America."

Cryonic preservation

How does the process of cryogenic freezing work?

- The person's body is cooled using an ice bath as soon as possible after he or she is declared legally dead in order to prevent decay to the brain cells and other tissues.
- The blood is flushed out and replaced with a cryoprotectant solution, or special non-toxic anti-freeze, to prevent ice crystals forming which would damage the cells.
- The body is packed in dry ice for transportation to the place where the final cooling process and storage will take place.
- The body is then slowly cooled down to even lower temperatures over several days using liquid nitrogen. Here, physical decay essentially stops.
- The body is placed in a storage tank filled with liquid nitrogen.
- Keeping a body at such low temperatures is thought to keep cells, tissues and organs intact.

However, he subsequently changed his position, saying he "respected the decisions" his daughter was making.

The judge said this fluctuation in his views was understandable, adding, "No other parent has ever been put in his position."

But he emphasized he was not ruling on the science of cryonics, but rather on the dispute between her parents over who was responsible for the arrangements after her death.

The judge also said there was no doubt the girl -- described as "a bright, intelligent young person who is able to articulate strongly held views on her current situation" -- had the capacity to start legal action.

"Over recent months, JS has used the internet to investigate cryonics: the freezing of a dead body in the hope that resuscitation and a cure may be possible in the distant future," he said.

"The scientific theory underlying cryonics is speculative and controversial, and there is considerable debate about its ethical implications.

"On the other hand, cryopreservation, the preservation of cells and tissues by freezing, is now a well-known process in certain branches of medicine, for example the preservation of sperm and embryos as part of fertility treatment.

"Cryonics is cryopreservation taken to its extreme."

The judge ruled in favor of her mother and said the girl had died peacefully, knowing her wishes had been met.

- Only a handful of companies in the United States and Russia currently offer cryopreservation.
- Proponents of the process say that future advances in science will allow the subjects of cryogenic freezing to be reanimated.
- It's thought reanimation will enable any damage to cells to be repaired and fatal diseases to be cured.
- But skeptics say that there is no objective evidence yet that a human body will survive cryopreservation with cells that will work again after warming.

Sources: Cryonics Institute, Alcor



Health +



The case at the High Court in London was the first of its kind in England -- and possibly the world.

But he cautioned that hospital officials had had "real misgivings" about the way the process was handled on the day she died.

The girl's mother was said to have been preoccupied with the arrangements after her death, rather than being fully available to her child, he said, and the voluntary organization which helped get her body ready for preservation was disorganized.

Body packed in dry ice

The case was said by the judge to be the only one of its kind to have come before the courts in England and Wales, and probably anywhere else. "It is an example of the new questions that science poses to the law, perhaps most of all to family law," he added.

The cost of the procedure in the United States -- which the judge said was about £37,000 (\$46,000) -- is being met by her maternal grandparents, he said, although the family is not well off. They chose the most basic arrangement, he said, which "simply involves the freezing of the body in perpetuity."

The Cryonics Institute, which is based in Michigan, said the body of a 14-year-old girl from London arrived at its facility, packed in dry ice, on October 25, about eight days after her

Live TV

cooling champer to cool to liquid nitrogen temperature," a statement posted on its website said.

"The human cooling program from dry ice was selected and the time needed to cool the patient to liquid nitrogen temperature was 24 hours. The patient was then placed in a cryostat for longterm cryonic storage."

The Cryonics Institute said the girl was its 143rd patient.

Its website explains the process as "a technique intended to hopefully save lives and greatly extend lifespan. It involves cooling legally-dead people to liquid nitrogen temperature

where physical decay essentially stops, in the hope that future scientific procedures will someday revive them and restore them to youth and good health.

"A person held in such a state is said to be a 'cryopreserved patient', because we do not regard the cryopreserved person as being inevitably 'dead'."

Can a whole body survive freezing process?

However, some skepticism remains about the science of cryogenics.

Barry Fuller, professor in Surgical Science and Low Temperature Medicine at University College London, said that cryopreservation "has many useful applications in day to day medicine, such as cryopreserving blood cells, sperm and embryos."

But, he said, "cryopreservation has not yet been successfully applied to large structures, such as human kidneys for transplantation, because we have not yet adequately been able to produce suitable equipment to optimize all the steps.

"This is why we have to say that at the moment we have no objective evidence that a whole human body can survive cryopreservation with cells which will function after rearming."

CNN's Simon Cullen and Meera Senthilingam contributed to this report.

Health +

Terrified driver films 'ghost girl' sitting on top of speeding car

By Mirror.co.uk 05:52, 17 NOV 2016 Updated 05:52, 17 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

The shadowy figure, with long black hair, perches without difficulty on the boot of the car as it drives at speed



<img

src="http://brightcove01.brightcove.com/24/4221396001/201611/2332/422139600 vs.jpg?pubId=4221396001" class="video-thumbnail"/>

A terrified driver has filmed what he claims to be a GHOST girl sitting on top of a speeding car.

Eerie footage shows a shadowy woman with long dark hair dressed in a striped top perching with ease on the boot of a car driving along a busy main road.

Police are now trying to trace the woman after seeing the clip, which has been viewed more than 2.7 million times since being shared online.

Photojournalist Powarit Katkul captured the bizarre footage in the district of Huai Khwang in Bangkok, Thailand.



Girl on the trunk pointing

questioning himself, asking friends: "Do you see what I see?"

Ghosts are revered and often feared in Thai culture

The creepy figure sits calmly, only moving to point at the people inside the vehicle as she spots herself being filmed.

Powarit told officers that the incident happened on Rama IX road, on Sunday at 6:30pm and that he "couldn't believe his eyes."

In the video he can be heard

Police checked the car's licence plate and discovered that it had been cancelled by the Department of Land Transport and was registered to a brown Opel taxi.

However, the car in the footage is red and does not appear to be a taxi.

Officers say they have contacted the brown Opel's owner for questioning.

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Girl on the trunk pointing

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Texan Yoga instructor kills two burglars in Chile

stuff Last updated 14:02, November 26 2016



and shot them dead.

A US yoga instructor has shot and killed two men who invaded her home on the outskirts of the Chilean capital, authorities say.

The men broke into the bedroom of 61-year-old Hari Nam Kaur Khalsa, hit her in the head with a weapon and tried to tie her up.

But prosecutor Osvaldo Soto said she broke free, grabbed her own, registered gun from under her pillow

Two other men escaped.

Soto said the instructor was free because she acted in self-defense.

Authorities have requested a security escort because "we fear that she might suffer some sort of reprisal," according to NBCDFW.com.

Khalsa, was born in Texas and studied at the University of Texas at Austin, has been teaching kundalini yoga in Chile since 1979, according to a biography on her yoga academy's website.

She told a local radio station she did not want to comment.

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The Girl and Death: The Art of August Brömse



Cult of Weird

The Girl and Death: The Art of August Brömse

By Charlie Hintz on September 13, 2013

August Brömse (1873-1925) was a Czech artist heavily influenced by contemporary German art and culture. His *Girl and Death* series originated in 1901-1902. It is believed to echo his relationship with concert singer Eisa Schünemann.

The series consists of seven paintings:



August Bromse - By the Window from the Girl and Death series





August Bromse - In the Park from the Girl and Death series



August Bromse - Life Escaping from the Girl and Death series

"The Girl and Death" is a modern variant of the Dance of Death. Death (a skeleton) plays a fantastic song on the violin; the girl listens in fascination and dances a wild dance — death accompanies her life's pilgrimage. Life becomes endless suffering for the girl, cursed by the deity; her love is fatefully led from the start by tragic steps. As a symbol of the first fruits of sin the girl, in some sort of hypnotic trance, flies through space on a great snake which — in some prints of the series — holds an apple in its mouth. The concept of the landscape evokes a sense of



August Bromse - An Old Song from the Girl and Death series



August Bromse - Dance from the Girl and Death series



August Bromse - I'm Coming from the Girl and Death series

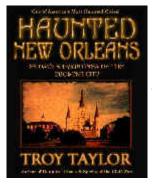
unreality and timelessness. One of the last prints brings the whole story up to date. The girl lies prostrate on a window-sill; the anonymous roof tops of the modern city appear in the background." — Otto M. Urban, In Morbid Colors: Art and the Idea of Decadence in the Bohemian

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August Bromse - The Lost Paradise from the Girl and Death series

THE LALAURIE HOUSE



HAUNTED NEW ORLEANS

THE LALAURIE HOUSE 1140 ROYAL STREET

The haunted history of the Lalaurie House is perhaps one of New Orleans' best known ghostly tales...

For more than 150 years, and through several generations, the LaLaurie House has been considered to be the most haunted and the most frightening location in the French Quarter.



MISTRESS OF DEATH: THE HAUNTED HISTORY OF MADAME LALAURIE

The haunted history of the LaLaurie Mansion in New Orleans is perhaps one of the best known stories of haunted houses in the city. It tragically recounts the brutal excess of slavery in a horrifying and gruesome manner because for more than 150 years, and through several generations, the Lalaurie house has been considered the most haunted location in the French Quarter. Let's just say this story is not for the faint of heart.... and not for the weak of stomach either.

The origin of the ghostly tale dates back to 1832 when Dr. Louis Lalaurie and his wife, Delphine, moved into their Creole mansion in the French Quarter. They became renowned for their social affairs and were respected for their wealth and prominence. Madame Lalaurie became known as the most influential French-Creole woman in the city, handling the family's business affairs and carrying herself with great style. Her daughters were among the finest dressed girls in New Orleans.

For those lucky enough to attend social functions at 1140 Royal Street, they were amazed by what they found there. The three-story mansion, although rather plain on the exterior, was graced with delicate iron work but the interior was lavish by anyone's standards. The house had been made for grand events and occasions. Mahogany doors that were hand-carved with flowers and human faces opened into a bright parlors, illuminated by the glow of hundreds of candles in gigantic chandeliers. Guests dined from European china and danced and rested on Oriental fabrics which had been imported at great expense.

Madame Lalaurie was considered one of the most intelligent and beautiful women in the city. Those who received her attentions at the wonderful gatherings could not stop talking about her. Guests in her home were

pampered as their hostess bustled about the house, seeing to their every need.

But this was the side of Madame Lalaurie the friends and admirers were allowed to see. There was another side. Beneath the delicate and refined exterior was a cruel, cold-blooded and possibly insane woman that some only suspected.... but others knew as fact.

The finery of the Lalaurie house was attended to by dozens of slaves and Madame Lalaurie was brutally cruel to them. She kept her cook chained to the fireplace in the kitchen where the sumptuous dinners were prepared and many of the others were treated much worse. We have to remember that, in those days, the slaves were not even regarded as being human. They were simply property and many slave owners thought of them as being lower than animals. Of course, this does not excuse the treatment of the slaves, or the institution of slavery itself, but merely serves as a reminder of just how insane Madame Lalaurie may have been.... because her mistreatment of the slaves went far beyond cruelty.

It was the neighbors on Royal Street who first began to suspect something was not quite right in the Lalaurie house. There were whispered conversations about how the Lalaurie slaves seemed to come and go quite often. Parlor maids would be replaced with no explanation or the stable boy was suddenly just disappear... never to be seen again.

Then, one day a neighbor was climbing her own stairs when she heard a scream and saw Madame Lalaurie chasing a little girl, the Madame's personal servant, with a whip. She pursued the girl onto the roof of the house, where the child jumped to her death. The neighbor later saw the small slave girl buried in a shallow grave beneath the cypress trees in the yard. A law that prohibited the cruel treatment of slaves was in effect in New Orleans and the authorities who investigated the neighbor's claims impounded the Lalaurie slaves and sold them at auction. Unfortunately for them, Madame Lalaurie coaxed some relatives into buying them and then selling them back to her in secret.

The stories continued about the mistreatment of the Lalaurie slaves and uneasy whispering spread among her former friends. A few party invitations were declined, dinner invitations were ignored and the family was soon politely avoided by other members of the Creole society. Finally, in April of 1834, all of the doubts about Madame Lalaurie were realized.....

A terrible fire broke out in the Lalaurie kitchen. Legend has it that it was set by the cook, who could endure no more of the Madame's tortures. Regardless of how it started, the fire swept through the house. After the blaze was put out, the fire fighters discovered a horrible sight behind a secret, barred door in the attic. They found more than a dozen slaves here, chained to the wall in a horrible state. They were both male and female.... some were strapped to makeshift operating tables... some were confined in cages made for dogs.... human body parts were scattered around and heads and human organs were placed haphazardly in buckets.... grisly souvenirs

were stacked on shelves and next to them a collection of whips and paddles. It was more horrible that anything created in man's imagination.

According to the newspaper, the *New Orleans Bee*, all of the victims were naked and the ones not on tables were chained to the wall. Some of the women had their stomachs sliced open and their insides wrapped about their waists. One woman had her mouth stuffed with animal excrement and then her lips were sewn shut.

The men were in even more horrible states. Fingernails had been ripped off, eyes poked out, and private parts sliced away. One man hung in shackles with a stick protruding from a hole that had been drilled in the top of his head. It had been used to "stir" his brains.

The tortures had been administered so as to not bring quick death. Mouths had been pinned shut and hands had been sewn to various parts of the body. Regardless, many of them had been dead for quite some time. Others were unconscious and some cried in pain, begging to be killed and put out of their misery.

The fire fighters fled the scene in disgust and doctors were summoned from a nearby hospital. It is uncertain just how many slaves were found in Madame Lalaurie's "torture chamber" but most of them were dead. There were a few who still clung to life.... like a woman whose arms and legs had been removed and another who had been forced into a tiny cage with all of her limbs broken than set again at odd angles.

Needless to say, the horrifying reports from the Lalaurie house were the most hideous things to ever occur in the city and word soon spread about the atrocities. It was believed that Madame Lalaurie alone was responsible for the horror and that her husband turned a blind, but knowing, eye to her activities.

Passionate words swept through New Orleans and a mob gathered outside the house, calling for vengeance and carrying hanging ropes. Suddenly, a carriage roared out of the gates and into the milling crowd. It soon disappeared out of sight.

Madame Lalaurie and her family were never seen again. Rumors circulated as to what became of them.... some said they ran away to France and others claimed they lived in the forest along the north shore of Lake Ponchatrain. Still other rumors claimed the family vanished into one of the small towns near New Orleans, where friends and relatives sheltered them from harm. Could this be true? And if so, could the terrible actions of Madame LaLaurie have "infected" another house in addition to the mansion in the French Quarter?

Whatever became of the Lalaurie family, there is no record that any legal action was ever taken against her and no mention that she was ever seen in New Orleans, or her fine home, again.

Of course, the same thing cannot be said for her victims.....

The stories of ghosts and a haunting at 1140 Royal Street began almost as soon as the Lalaurie carriage fled the house in the darkness.

After the mutilated slaves were removed from the house, it was sacked and vandalized by the mob. After a brief occupancy, the house remained vacant for many years after, falling into a state of ruin and decay. Many people claimed to hear screams of agony coming from the empty house at night and saw the apparitions of slaves walking about on the balconies and in the yards. Some stories even claimed that vagrants who had gone into the house seeking shelter were never heard from again.

The house had been placed on the market in 1837 and was purchased by a man who only kept it for three months. He was plagued by strange noises, cries and groans in the night and soon abandoned the place. He tried leasing the rooms for a short time, but the tenants only stayed for a few days at most. Finally, he gave up and the house was abandoned.

Following the Civil War, Reconstruction turned the empty Lalaurie mansion into an integrated high school for "girls of the Lower District" but in 1874, the White League forced the black children to leave the school. A short time later though, a segregationist school board changed things completely and made the school for black children only. This lasted for one year.

In 1882, the mansion once again became a center for New Orleans society when an English teacher turned it into a "conservatory of music and a fashionable dancing school". All went well for some time as the teacher was well-known and attracted students from the finest of the local families.... but then things came to a terrible conclusion.

A local newspaper apparently printed an accusation against the teacher, claiming some improprieties with female students, just before a grand social event was to take place at the school. Students and guests shunned the place and the school closed the following day.

A few years later, more strange events plagued the house and it became the center for rumors regarding the death of Jules Vignie, the eccentric member of a wealthy New Orleans family. Vignie lived secretly in the house from the later 1880's until his death in 1892. He was found dead on a tattered cot in the mansion, apparently living in filth, while hidden away in the surrounding rooms was a collection of antiques and treasure. A bag containing several hundred dollars was found near his body and another search found several thousand dollars hidden in his mattress.

For some time after, rumors of a lost treasure circulated about the mansion.... but few dared to go in search of it.

The house was abandoned again until the late 1890's. In this time of great immigration to America, many Italians came to live in New Orleans. Landlords quickly bought up old and abandoned buildings to convert into cheap housing for this new wave of renters. The Lalaurie mansion became just such a house.... and for many of the tenants even the low rent was not enough to keep them there.

During the time when the mansion was an apartment house, a number of strange events were recorded. Among them was an encounter between a occupant and a naked black man in chains who attacked him. The black man abruptly vanished. Others claimed to have animals butchered in the house; children were attacked by a phantom with a whip; strange figures appeared wrapped in shrouds; a young mother was terrified to find a woman in elegant evening clothes bending over her sleeping infant; and of course, the everpresent sounds of screams, groans and cries that would reverberate through the house at night.

It was never easy to keep tenants in the house and finally, after word spread of the strange goings-on there, the mansion was deserted once again.

The house would later become a bar and then a furniture store. The saloon, taking advantage of the building's ghastly history was called the "Haunted Saloon". The owner knew many of the building's ghost stories and kept a record of the strange things experienced by patrons.

The furniture store did not fare as well in the former Lalaurie house. The owner first suspected vandals when all of his merchandise was found ruined on several occasions, covered in some sort of dark, stinking liquid. He finally waited one night with a shotgun, hoping the vandals would return. When dawn came, the furniture was all ruined again even though no one, human anyway, had entered the building. The owner closed the place down.

Today, the house has been renovated and restored and serves as luxury apartments for those who can afford them. Apparently, tenants are a little easier to keep today than they were one hundred years ago.

Is the Lalaurie house still haunted? I really don't know for sure, but one has to wonder if the spirits born from this type of tragedy can ever really rest? A few years ago, the owners of the house were in the midst of remodeling when they found a hasty graveyard hidden in the back of the house beneath the wooden floor. The skeletal remains had been dumped unceremoniously into the ground and when officials investigated, they found the remains to be of fairly recent origins.

They believed that it was Madame Lalaurie's own private graveyard. She had removed sections of the floor in the house and had hastily buried them to avoid being seen and detected. The discovery of the remains answered one question and unfortunately created another. The mystery of why some of the Lalaurie slaves seemed to just simply disappear was solved at last..... but it does make you wonder just how many victims Madame Lalaurie may have claimed?

And how many of them may still be lingering behind in our world?

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The latest health fad is the most expensive cheese in the WORLD

By Mary Palmer 17:00, 23 NOV 2016 Updated 17:00, 23 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

The latest health fad is donkey cheese - and it's so rare Novak Djokovic has bought up entire world's supply for a year

It's the most expensive cheese in the WORLD - and in its native Serbia, the delicacy is a massive hit with not only tennis stars - but would you try it?



Donkey cheese is seen in the village of Kukujevci near a farm in Zasavica Resort

Health nuts will be rushing to put the newest dietary craze on their Christmas cheeseboard this year - DONKEY CHEESE.

The mule-based dairy product is set to become the latest in high-end eating - especially since it is said to have exceptional health benefits.

Fine dining has often been littered with oddities such as camel's milk, ostrich meat and samphire.

But now donkey cheese - which can currently only be purchased from one farm in rural

Serbia - is being tipped by health experts to be the next big thing, reports the Daily Record .

How healthy is a meal in our favourite restaurants? Take a look at our handy guide

Donkey cheese is said to be high in protein, calcium and omega 3 fatty acids, which are all beneficial for good heart health.

That's because donkey milk - which forms the basis of the cheese - is low-fat, contains an antiallergenic and has 60 times more vitamin C than ordinary cow's milk.

Those who have dared to try it say it tastes sweet and nutty, like a Manchego cheese.

And tennis star Novak Djokovic bought up the entire world's supply of it for a new restaurant chain he opened in 2013, so he's obviously a fan, reports the MailOnline.

But despite winning rave reviews, it is the price point where the donkey cheese draws criticism. The delicacy - named Pule - costs a stomach churning £880 per kilo.

This makes it the most expensive cheese in the world.

Is this the next trendy food concept? Sushi restaurant replaces conveyor belt with river for floating food

Its creators justify their high rates because the cheese is very rare and results in high production costs.

11/24/2016 The latest health fad is donkey cheese - and it's so rare Novak Djokovic has bought up entire world's supply for a year - Mirror Online

One litre of donkey's milk costs £34 and each kilogram of cheese needs a whopping 25 litres of milk.

And there is only one farm in the world that's actually producing it.

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The letter M disappears as Rivalry Week begins in Columbus

AP Associated PressNovember 21, 2016



Red tape covers the Ms on the official state Ohio historical marker recognizing former Ohio State NCAA college football coach Woody Hayes at the Woody Hayes Football Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, Ohio, Monday, Nov. 21, 2016. Ohio State fans' distaste for Michigan is so strong that even the letter M is unpopular in Columbus this week. (AP Photo/Mitch Stacy)

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Rivalry Week is serious business around here.

Ohio State fans' distaste for Michigan is so strong that even the letter M is unpopular in Columbus this week.

Visitors to the Woody Hayes Football Center on Monday morning found that someone used red tape to cover up all the Ms in the official state of Ohio historical marker recognizing the iconic coach. If history is any indication, similar hijinks will follow.

No. 3 Michigan plays No. 2 Ohio State on Saturday in Columbus with a spot in the national playoff likely on the line. The Buckeyes have beaten the Wolverines four consecutive times. It's the 11th time the teams have played when both were in the top five of the AP Top 25 poll.

There's Hamilton, the hit musical and Hamilton, the city. Angry social media users confuse the two

2016/11/21 cbc.ca



2016 2:23 PM ET

For a CBC TV news interview with Riane Leonard of the Hamilton Theatre check the bottom of this story

By Kelly Bennett, CBC News Posted: Nov 20, 2016 2:31 PM ET Last Updated: Nov 21,



 'We, sir, are the diverse America': Broadway's Hamilton cast addresses Mike Pence at performance

When Riane Leonard finished running the lights for Friday's performance of *The Toxic Avenger* at Hamilton Theatre Inc., she checked her phone and saw reams of notifications.

Leonard, who is a member of the theatre company's production team, also manages the Twitter account for the theatre company based on MacNab Street North in Hamilton, Ont.

"Oh, this is great!" she thought. "People are tweeting about the show."

But the first tweet she saw was alarming. "The first one was something like, 'I'm never supporting Hamilton Theatre again!"

Leonard had a moment of panic. "Oh sweet God, what did we do that was so wrong?" she asked herself.

It didn't take long to piece together what happened.

The Twitter account for the theatre company in Hamilton, the city in southern Ontario, was being mistaken for the account for *Hamilton*, the Broadway musical.

"Dozens of angry Americans tagged the Hamilton theatre company's Twitter account (@HamiltonTheatre) instead of the official *Hamilton* musical account (@HamiltonMusical)," Leonard told CBC News.

Cast confronts Pence

The tweets were in reaction to an incident last week in which U.S. Vice President-elect Mike Pence was booed by audience members at a performance, then addressed personally by the cast members of the Tony award-winning musical.

Actor Brandon Victor Dixon, who plays Aaron Burr, America's third vice-president, told Pence that the cast, which has won praise for its diversity, was concerned about a government led by Donald Trump.

Dixon's comments created a flood of online reaction, some in favour of Pence, others defending the cast's move. And some of that reaction pinged Leonard's phone.

"They've been calling to boycott Hamilton and stage protests but little do they know that they are picking on Hamilton, Ontario's oldest musical theatre company," Leonard said.

"None of them have bothered to actually look at our account to see that they are wrong."

Mistook theatre company for hit musical

When Trump supporters expressed disdain for the cast's actions, they accidentally tagged Hamilton Theatre Inc. instead of *Hamilton*, the musical.

Leonard has also received notifications from supporters of the cast's message.

@HamiltonTheatre The shamefulness of ur hectoring of VPE Pence pales only in comparison 2 what Lincoln suffered in a theatre #BoycottHamiton

— @BemusedCanuck

Completely disrespectful @HamiltonTheatre there's a place time ... cancelling my plans to see this play

— @marigoula5759

'Opportunity' to voice concerns

Leonard said she personally supports the cast's move.

"They had an opportunity to have their voice heard by someone who is very high up in their government," she said. "I think it would've been a missed opportunity if not."

She said she was surprised to see that those who sent the messages didn't do their homework before sending the missives to a Canadian theatre company.

"You're funneling it to the wrong person, guys," she said. "All you need to do is check our profile to see we're not even in the same country."

But she's glad if the mix-up resulted in a few less vitriolic tweets sent to the Hamilton cast.

"If we helped take any of the heat off our friends on Broadway, we're here to help."

kelly.bennett@cbc.ca | @kellyrbennett

CBC

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This Giant Car Condom Is the Easiest Way To Keep Your Vehicle Clean

Andrew Liszewski gizmodo.com

This Giant Car Condom Is the Easiest Way To Keep Your Vehicle Clean

Monday 11:16am



If you avoid trips to the beach because you don't want your car getting filled with sand, or won't buy a real Christmas tree because you don't want to spend weeks cleaning up pine needles, this giant car condom will keep the inside of your vehicle looking as clean and new as the day it rolled off the lot.

Using just a tarp will help keep the floor of your vehicle clean, but what about all the other surfaces inside?

As anyone with a car knows, dirt quickly gets everywhere, and that's why instead you totally *need* this giant plastic bag that protects the floor, side panels, and ceiling from dirt and damage, no matter what you toss in the back.

It seems like a particularly worthwhile investment this time of year because once January rolls around, you'll be looking to get rid of that dead Christmas tree that's dropping needles faster than a dog shedding fur. And with this \$55 all-encompassing tarp in the back of your car, you can easily haul your tree off to the dump without worrying about needles and tree sap mucking up your meticulously clean ride.

[Pro-Idee]

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Thunderstorm asthma: Two dead after intense Melbourne storm leads to thousands of calls for help

9news.com.au

10:09am November 22, 2016



Melbourne had an intense storm hit after a scorching hot day, causing felled trees and damaged homes.

Two people have died as Melbourne's emergency services were inundated with calls related to strong winds and wild conditions, leading to an "unprecedented" outbreak of thunderstorm asthma.

Ambulance Victoria's Mick Stephenson confirmed two people died as paramedics dealt with a six-fold increase in calls last night, one after waiting half an hour for an ambulance.

"Whether or not they (the deaths) are related to this phenomenon we just don't know ... we will have to review each incident," Mr Stephenson said at a press conference.

The two people had reported respiratory issues, authorities said.

Were you, or a relative affected by the storm? Email contact@9news.com.au

The roof was ripped off a carport in Altona Meadows. (Amanda Kemp/Supplied)

A surge of wild weather passed through Victoria last night. (Amanda Kemp/Supplied)

A patient who rushed himself to St Vincent's Hospital suffering breathing difficulties said he "thought he was dying".

Guo Lu told 9NEWS he was struggling to breathe and feeling "worse and worse" from coughing and wheezing.

"I came here to emergency, the nurse checked me very fast," he said.

Authorities were left baffled after an "unprecedented" outbreak of thunderstorm asthma, with many hospitals forced to implement a disaster situation.

Almost 2000 triple zero calls for ambulances were made when the weather turned from around 6pm to 11pm. Ambulance Victoria said usual levels would only see them take around 345 calls for help.

Ambulance Victoria's Executive Director Emergency Operations Mick Stephenson said most calls were for patients in the west of Melbourne.

"We essentially had a day's workload within five hours," Mr Stephenson said.

"In the 15 minutes from 7pm when we would expect about 30 triple zero calls for ambulance there were 200 calls – that's a call every 4.5 seconds."

Every available ambulance had to be dispatched during the height of the storm, with 50 extra vehicles needed and Metropolitan Fire Brigade members deployed to assist.

"We had an extraordinary influx, about an additional 100 patients who all arrived within a matter of hours. We had so many that a code brown team had to be set up, and we even considered setting up a second emergency department within the foyer of the hospital," St Vincent's Hospital Media and Communications Manager Kathy Bowlen said.

Ambulance Victoria State Health Commander Paul Holman said in his 40 years, he had never seen anything like it.

[&]quot;I felt like I was dying. They [medical staff] saved my life."

A severe thunderstorm which swept through Melbourne yesterday brought an end to the state's hottest day since March.

"I think a spike in calls would be the understatement of a century," he said.

Paramedics called in help from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, police and doctors to help with the demand after they ran out of ambulances. At one stage, 190 people required help.

"These were quite sick patients," Mr Holman said, saying most jobs were code ones or top priority emergencies.

On a normal night, there would be about 10-20 cases waiting mostly of low or middle priority level.

Extra staff were put on the emergency triage phone service to make sure all patients were spoken to see if they needed an ambulance or could instead go to their local GP, Mr Holman said.

The State Emergency Service received more than 350 calls for help for damaged homes and trees down, despite the mercury tipping 35 degrees in the city yesterday.

The intense weather also left 13,000 homes without power at the height of the storm, with the suburbs of Altona, Altona Meadows, Tarneit, Truganina and Wyndham Vale among the hardest hit.

Meantime, Altona Meadows resident Amanda Kemp photographed the aftermath of the storm in her neighbourhood.

Ms Kemp told 9news.com.au a "mini tornado" came through the area at around 5.45pm yesterday, lasting for about 30 seconds.

"A carport/pergola roof from a house in the street behind apparently flew across the rooftops and landed on the corner of my roof," she said.

"There is now a hole of only about one metre in size."

The thunderstorm caused temperatures to plummet across Melbourne, with the mercury dropping from 35 degrees at 5.30pm to 23 degrees at 6.40pm.

After a sizzling Monday where temperatures reached 35 degrees, Melbourne should have cool to mild days for the rest of the week, with a top of 17 degrees on Tuesday and 18 degrees on Wednesday.

Tuesday will be wet, with rain persisting for most of the day, the Bureau of Meteorology predicts.

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Toddler is the 'only person in the world' with rare condition that means he can't eat or drink ANYTHING

thesun.ie 00:10. 15 Nov 2016



Liam Denner has an undiagnosed condition that makes his body attack itself when he eats or drinks.

A TODDLER is thought to be the only person in the world to suffer from a mysterious condition, which means he can't eat or drink anything - including water.

Two-year-old, Liam Denner has left medics baffled – unable to find an answer as to why the youngster's body seems to attack itself when he eats or drinks.

Liam also has a depleted immune system which makes him prone to infections.

He has to be fed intravenously, through a process called parenteral nutrition

(TPN).

But TPN can lead to liver failure, meaning the tot is in a race against time to find a diagnosis.

Liam's mum Zoey Horrocks, 25, said: "It's scary. Every time he gets an infection or gets admitted into hospital, I don't know whether I will be coming home with him.

"They have done so many tests on him. They think he's one of a kind and he's the only person with this condition.

"The things they have seen inside, they have never seen before."



The TPN feeding leaves the toddler open to infection

The TPN feeding leaves the toddler open to infection SWNS:South West News Service

"He can't eat or drink anything, he can't even tolerate water. He is fed intravenously into his heart through a central line.

"He has battled so many infections. Having the line in his heart means if bugs grow, he gets quite poorly.

"He doesn't have an immune system and picks up so many bugs."

Zoey said Liam's condition was discovered not long after he was born.

Now, every time he has anything to eat or drink his body attacks itself, causing him to vomit and excrete blood.

Zoey, a single mum, said: "He was born premature and he originally went into intensive care because he wasn't breathing properly.

"We then realised he wasn't feeding and he wouldn't tolerate it when we tried to feed him.

"After a week or two of trying to get him to feed he had a massive bleed and when the doctor picked him up blood was just streaming down his leg."

Doctors initially thought Liam was suffering from a bowel condition and was transferred from Bolton hospital, Greater Manchester to Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool, Merseyside.



to diagnose Liam

Doctors have tried desperately to diagnose Liam SWNS:South West News Service

Baffled doctors then carried out numerous tests on Liam in a bid to find out his condition.

Zoey recalled: "They said it could be something really rare or really simple. They started loads of investigations and put him on TPN.

"They checked his bone marrow, they checked everything. There came a point when they were just stuck."

Liam and Zoey were then referred to Great Ormond Street hospital in Doctors have tried desperately London to meet specialists, including one from Amsterdam, in a bid to get a diagnosis.

Zoey said: "They thought he had Tufting Syndrome, which there is a cure for but when they did the test it came back negative.

"They went inside his bowel to investigate and they found these markings that they had never seen before.

"When he was fed things these markings open up for some reason."

"Then the specialist came from Amsterdam said he didn't have a clue what was going on and they said at this moment in time there is nothing they can do to help him."

Zoey, from Atherton in Greater Manchester, added: "It's worrying. At the last appointment we had at Great Ormond Street, they told us there is nothing they can do to help him.

"We have to just see how he goes on TPN.



Just hours after feeding, Liam will start vomiting blood SWNS:South West **News Service**

He is currently connected to it for 20 hours a day. It's fine, but can change overnight.

"His liver could change overnight and I would be stuck and probably lose him. It's hard.

"We've challenged him loads of times in hospital to try to feed him but every time we do he bleeds and throws blood up and he is in a lot of pain.

"Last time we gave him broken down food salt but within two days he had started to bleed and he was in pain straight away.

Just hours after feeding, Liam "It is frustrating not knowing what is wrong with him but I am now more will start vomiting blood scared for the future.

"It's the not knowing what will happen to him. I have two other children as well so trying to look after all of them is hard work."

Zoey, who is also mum to McKenzie, eight, and Scarlett, four, is now hoping to raise £2,000 to transform her back garden into an area the children can play together.

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SWNS:South West News Service

Monkey incident sparks clashes in southern Libyan city of Sabha

09:12 EST, 20 November 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Sixteen are killed and 50 wounded as two tribes in southern Libya clash over a MONKEY after the animal attacked a group of schoolgirls outside a shop

- Sixteen people were killed when two tribes came to blows in Sabha, Libya
- 50 wounded following clashes with Gaddadfa and Awlad Suleiman tribes
- A monkey belonging to a Gaddadfa tribsman attacked group of schoolgirls
- Their rival tribe retaliated and killed three people from the Gaddadfa tribe

By Thomas Burrows for MailOnline

An incident involving a monkey saw two tribes come to blows in Libya, leaving 16 people dead.

A further 50 were wounded following the clashes between rival factions in the southern city of Sabha, the heart of the country's smuggling and human trafficking network.

According to residents, the latest bout of violence erupted between the Awlad Suleiman and Gaddadfa tribes when a monkey belonging to a shopkeeper from the Gaddadfa tribe attacked a group of schoolgirls passing by.

The monkey pulled off one of the girls' head scarf, leading men from the Awlad Suleiman tribe to retaliate.

They killed three people from the Gaddadfa tribe as well as the monkey, according to a resident who spoke to Reuters.



In the Sabha region (pictured) - a hub for migrant and arms smuggling in Libya's south - militia abuses and the deterioration of living conditions have been especially acute

The resident, who wished to remain anonymous because of security concerns, said: 'There was an escalation on the second and third days with the use of tanks, mortars and other heavy weapons.

'There are still sporadic clashes and life is completely shut down in the areas where there has been fighting.'

Like other parts of Libya, Sabha has been periodically plagued by conflict since the uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi five years ago split the country into rival factions.

In the Sabha region - a hub for migrant and arms smuggling in Libya's often neglected south - militia abuses and the deterioration of living conditions have been especially acute.

The Gaddadfa and the Awlad Suleiman represent the most powerful armed factions in the region.



In the Sabha region - a hub for migrant and arms smuggling in Libya's often neglected south - militia abuses and the deterioration of living conditions have been especially acute

During the latest clashes, which took place in the city centre, initial attempts by tribal leaders to calm the fighting and arrange a ceasefire failed, residents said.

By Sunday, Sabha Medical Centre had received the bodies of 16 people killed in the clashes and around 50 wounded, a spokesman said.

He added: 'There are women and children among the wounded and some foreigners from sub-Saharan African countries among those killed due to indiscriminate shelling.'

The city lies about 660km (410 miles) south of Tripoli.

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upi.com

UPI

By Daniel Uria | Nov. 17, 2016 at 2:05 PM



A woman in Scotland defended the register at a fast food restaurant from a sword-wielding attacker by chasing him with a plastic fork. Julie Crighton, 23, managed to chase off the attacker, 20-year-old Arthur Rennie, who was later sentenced to four years in prison. Photo by Hans/Pixabay

GREENOCK, Scotland, Nov. 17 (UPI) -- A woman in Scotland managed to ward off a sword-

wielding attacker at a fast food restaurant armed with only a plastic fork.

Julie Crighton, 23, chased the attacker, 20-year-old Arthur Rennie, with the plastic utensil after he entered Cowden's News and Fast Food Shop with a sword and demanded she empty the cash register, STV reported.

"This was a large sword and the incident must have been very frightening," Judge Lady Rae of the High Court in Glasgow said. "She is an extremely brave young woman who tackled Mr. Rennie despite the fact he had that sword."

Crighton said the man entered the store brandishing a 2-foot sword and entered the store while an accomplice waited at the door.

"He came towards me and pushed me and I pushed him back. I think he realised I wasn't going to give him anything. He went out and I went out the shop after him," she told the BBC. "I wasn't thinking of catching him. Just seeing where he was going."

She was able to identify the weapon in court and Rennie was sentenced to four years in prison.

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U-Bahn train found filled with autumn foliage in Berlin

8/11 thelocal.de

THE LOCAL 6



The Local



U-Bahn train found filled with autumn foliage in Berlin

The Local · 14 Nov 2016, 10:05

Published: 14 Nov 2016 10:05

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GMT+01:00

BVG staff are quite accustomed to cleaning up messes left in or around U-Bahn trains, but this one proved to be quite a different challenge.

The Berlin transit company's workers discovered early Friday morning that

someone had filled an U-Bahn carriage parked in storage with dried leaves, covering the entire floor and all the seats, Tagesspiegel reported on Saturday.

The clean-up effort involving brooms and fans lasted several hours and caused delays due to the train being out of service.

The trick was presumably the work of graffiti artists, Tagesspiegel explains, because an image of the autumnal U-Bahn scene was posted on the Facebook page Berlin Writers, a magazine and website dedicated to street art.

der Herbst ist da! via EASYdoesit BerlinWriters

Posted by BerlinWriters on Saturday, November 12, 2016

The post had the caption "Autumn is here!" And was shared more than 500 times as of Friday.

But not everyone was amused.

"Think about the passengers who had to work and because of you the train didn't come," one Facebook user wrote.

The Local (news@thelocal.de)

Unbelievable moment little boy is spotted driving 125mph car on busy motorway

By Keyan Milanian 20:52, 16 NOV 2016 Updated 20:52, 16 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

The baby-faced child can be seen peering over the steering wheel as he negotiates the hazardous, wet road conditions while driving at about 60mph



vs.jpg?pubId=4221396001" class="video-thumbnail"/>

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src="http://brightcove01.brightcove.com/24/4221396001/201611/2116/422139600</pre>

This was the incredible moment a motorist filmed a little boy as he drove a car along a busy motorway.

The child, who looks no older than 12, was captured on camera sitting in the driver's seat as he sped along the road in Monterrey, Mexico.

Witnesses claimed the boy looked amazingly comfortable as he peered over the steering wheel, even in rainy conditions.

They believe the child was driving at more than 60mph.

It appears the passenger who films the boy had spotted the strange sight as they drove down the National Highway.



The film shows their car approach the boy's, which is in the middle of a three-lane road.

The camera then zooms in on the baby-faced boy who is staring at the road ahead.

He is at the wheel of a Mazda CX-5, a people carrier capable of speeds in excess of 125mph.

Amazingly, an adult passenger in the boy's car appears to be tapping away at a mobile phone as the child drives.

The 42-second clip of the incident was uploaded to YouTube on Monday and has been viewed more than 38,000 times.

It isn't the first time a child driver has been caught on camera though.

Last year, another boy was spotted behind the wheel of a family car by a shocked fellow motorist.

Recorded from the passenger seat of his car, he records the SUV pulling up next to his car with the youngster behind the wheel.



Struggling to see over the steering wheel, he is busy checking out the traffic, before smiling at the man recording the footage, filmed in Phoenix, Arizona.

As the car pulls up, the witness says: "There's a kid driving that car, right there."

The adult in the passenger seat is heard laughing, as two other children are sat in the back of the car.

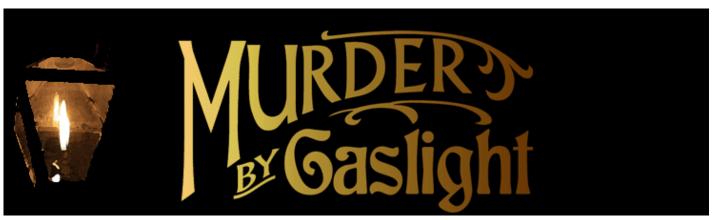
The witness added: "Dude, you're going to get someone f***ing killed man.

"It's not safe man, come on, dude it's rush hour, there's a lot of cars."

But the adult is insisting everyone is safe saying: "I have my hand on the e-brake."

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The Walworth Patricide.



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, May 25, 2013



The name Walworth was an old and venerable one in the state of New York. William Walworth arrived there from London in 1689; during the American Revolution, Benjamin Walworth fought in the Battle of White Plains; Reuben Hyde Walworth, in 1828, was named Chancellor of New York, the state's highest judicial office. But in 1873 the name Walworth was forever tarnished when Frank Walworth murdered his father Mansfield Walworth.

Date: June 3, 1873

Location: New York, New York

Ellen Hardin Walworth

Victim: Mansfield Walworth

Cause of Death: Gunshot

Accused: Frank Walworth

Synopsis:

Reuben Walworth was an up and coming young attorney when he married Maria Avery of Plattsburg, New York. They settled in at Pine Grove, outside of Saratoga Springs, which would become the Walworth estate. Maria died in1848 leaving Reuben a widower with five children. Two years later, on a trip to Louisville, Kentucky, he met a thirty-nine-year-old widow named Sarah Hardin. After only one meeting he proposed to her and she accepted. That is when the trouble began.

Sarah and her children, two sons and a daughter, moved in with Reuben's family at Pine Grove. Reuben's youngest son, nineteen year old Mansfield, became infatuated with Sarah's daughter

Ellen, also nineteen, and they began courting in secret. In 1852 Mansfield and Ellen revealed their romance and were married in a lavish ceremony at Pine Grove.



Reuben Walworth had educated his son to follow in his footsteps, but Mansfield had no love for the law and instead became a novelist. Though prolific, as an author Mansfield Walworth was not particularly successful either critically or financially and had to rely on his father's money to support his family. Reuben Walworth had little respect for the life his son had chosen and on his death he left Mansfield a small portion of his fortune, to be held in trust by his older brother, to support Mansfield's wife and children. Mansfield felt emasculated by this disinheritance and took out his frustrations on his wife.

The marriage had always been tumultuous and Mansfield Walworth was an abusive husband. He spent extended periods away from his wife and had affairs with other women. At the time of Reuben's death, Mansfield

and Ellen were separated; she had taken their children back to Kentucky. They tried several times to reconcile, in Kentucky and at Pine Grove, and though they always began with the best of intentions, the meetings invariably would end with Mansfield beating Ellen over some perceived insult or jealousy. And Ellen, bruised and often pregnant, would leave him once more.



In January 1871, while Ellen was pregnant with their eighth child, she and Mansfield tried one last time to reconcile. While they were in Ellen's New York City apartment, calmly discussing where and how they would live, Mansfield went into a rage and accused Ellen of conspiring with his family to drag him back to Saratoga. Ellen raised her arms to shield herself from Mansfield's blows, and he grabbed her hand and bit one of her fingers to the bone. Her screams awakened everyone in the household, and their seventeen year old son Frank broke up the fight. Two weeks later Ellen filed for divorce and never saw her husband again.

Frank Walworth assumed the role of protector for his mother, who was now living at Pine Grove. Though Mansfield could no longer physically abuse Ellen, he would send her abusive and threatening letters. Frank was able to intercept these letters before they could disturb his mother. But Frank had his own problems; he was subject to spells where he would lie stiff and pallid, his face unnaturally "convulsed." He became absentminded and forgetful and would sometimes cry out in his sleep.

Frank never forgave his father for the way he treated Ellen. During a chance meeting with his father in Saratoga Frank told him if he did not leave Ellen alone he would shoot him.

"There are bounds," Frank told him, "which I will not allow any man to go beyond with impunity, especially when my mother is being insulted."



Ellen Hardin Walworth

On June 2, 1873, Frank intercepted another letter from his father to his mother. In it Mansfield accused Ellen of turning his children against him. He said that unless she convinced him that she had not taught their children to hate him he would kill her and himself. This was the last straw for Frank; he took the train to New York City and went to the boarding house where his father was living. His father was out so he left a note with the landlady:

"I want to settle some family matters. Call at the Sturtevant House. If I am not there I will leave word with the clerk. Frank Walworth."

Mansfield did not return until midnight so did not go to the Sturtevant House until six o'clock the next morning. The bellman escorted Mansfield to room 267 where his son was waiting for him. After the door was shut, guests in adjoining rooms heard shouting, then four gunshots fired in guick

succession. Frank walked out of the room and went quickly to the front desk; he told the clerk that he had shot his father and wanted a policeman.

Trial: June 24, 1873

Frank Walworth's trial was a sensation in an era when murders always generated headlines in New York City. His fellow inmates in the Tombs prison included other famous murderers such as Edward Stokes and William Sharkey, whose stories had been followed in daily papers throughout America. All of the Walworth family's dirty linen—though hardly a secret in Saratoga—would be exposed by the New York press.

There was no question that Frank Walworth had murdered his father; what was at issue was whether the murder was in self-defense, and whether or not Frank Walworth was insane at the time. There was some debate over the extent that Mansfield Walworth's letters constituted direct threats and the judge hesitated to include them. He finally allowed all to be read except those that were "entirely too filthy to be repeated." If nothing else, the letters made the trial as much about Mansfield's behavior as about Frank's.

The defense brought out evidence of Frank Walworth's deteriorating mental health. They examined an expert witness who declared that Frank Walworth was epileptic. The prosecution countered with their own experts who asserted that Frank was not having a fit when he committed murder.

This would be the first murder case tried under a new state law that distinguished between first and second degree murder—both were intentional murder but first degree required "deliberation and premeditation." The jury took advantage of the new law and found Frank Walworth guilty of second degree murder. It meant life in prison rather than execution.

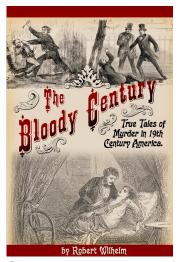
Verdict: Guilty of second degree murder

Aftermath:

Frank Walworth was taken first to Sing Sing prison then within the first year he was transferred to Auburn Prison; fellow inmates there included murderers, Kate Stoddard and Henrietta Robinson. In 1877, after four years in prison, Frank was pardoned by newly elected Governor Lucius Robinson who, as a lawyer, had served before Chancellor Walworth. Frank returned to Pine Grove where he lived until his death in 1886 from a lung condition contracted in prison.

The death of her husband had been liberating for Ellen Hardin Walworth; she became an author, a lawyer and an educator. She was one of the founders of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Another of her sons, Clarence Augustus Walworth, wrote *The Walworths of America*, a history of the Walworth family which makes no mention of the murder.



This is one of 50 stories featured in the new book The Bloody Century

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Wannabe vampire 'stabbed boyfriend after letting him drink her blood'

metro.co.uk

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukWednesday 30 Nov 2016 7:07 am



Wannabe vampire 'stabbed boyfriend after letting him drink her blood'

Victoria Vanatter who allowed her boyfriend to drink her blood then stabbed him (Picture: Greene County Sheriff's Office via AP)

A teenager allowed her drunk boyfriend to cut her arm then drink her blood while discussing vampires, and then stabbed him during an ensuing argument, according to police.

Victoria Vanatter of Springfield, Missouri, pleaded not guilty Monday to charges of first-degree domestic assault and armed criminal action in connection with the incident last Wednesday.

Vanatter stabbed her boyfriend in the back and shoulder after he repeatedly hit her during the argument, Springfield police investigator Scott Hill

wrote in a probable-cause statement that accompanied the criminal complaint.

Officers responding to Vanatter's 911 call said they found the bloodied couple, a heart drawn in blood on a living room wall, and 'I'm sorry' scrawled in blood along with another heart on a kitchen counter.

On the boyfriend's bare chest was a symbol of a cross that also appeared to be drawn in blood, Hill wrote.

Vanatter told investigators that she routinely cut herself so she could drink her own blood and 'believed she could become a serial killer,' Hill wrote.

'Vanatter admitted to me that she was a threat to society and we need to take her seriously,' the investigator said.

She and her boyfriend, who refused to cooperate with police and insisted his knife wounds were self-inflicted, were treated at a hospital, Hill said.

Vanatter also is charged as a persistent offender on probation for convictions last year of felony assault and felony domestic assault related to separate incidents in other counties.

Vanatter does not have a publicly listed phone number. The name of her boyfriend – identified in court documents only as 'B.H.' – has not been released.

She remains in prison on on \$150,000 (£120,000) bond.

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By Ben Hooper | Nov. 17, 2016 at 2:36 PM



This bear statue was stolen earlier this month from outside the Russell Stover factory in Abilene, Kan. Screenshot: KSN-TV

ABILENE, Kan., Nov. 17 (UPI) -- Police in Kansas are on the hunt for a particular sweet stolen landmark -- a statue of a candy bear outside the Russell Stover factory.

Abilene police said the 3-1/2-foot-tall statue, which depicts a candy bear being coated in chocolate, was stolen in the late hours of Nov. 4 or early Nov. 5 from in front of the Russell

Stover factory and candy store in Abilene.

Police said they are reviewing Department of Transportation traffic cameras to see if they contain any footage helpful to the investigation.

Russell Stover Plant Manager Paul Willis said the bear has become a popular landmark since it was donated to the facility by its former owners in the 1990s.

"It is a tourist kind of a landmark here in town," Willis told KSN-TV.

He said tourists often stop to snap photos with the bear.

"We actually built this patio because so many people did want to take pictures with it," Willis said. "We even put a sign, 'don't stand on the bear,' because we didn't want anyone to fall off."

Willis said there hasn't been any sign of the bear since its disappearance.

"No sign of it," he said. "We keep looking on Facebook to see if anybody has any pictures of it in their living room or their front porch."

"We don't know if it will show up on the beach somewhere in a Hawaiian shirt with a margarita or something else," Willis said.

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Domino's testing out pizza delivery by reindeer in Japan

upi.com



ISHIKARI, Japan, Nov. 23 (UPI) -- The Japanese arm of pizza chain Domino's announced it is testing an unusual solution to winter weather difficulties -- delivery by reindeer.

Domino's Japan announced it is currently testing out the possibility of using riderless reindeer to deliver pizzas in the snowy north of the country amid expectations of a particularly harsh winter.

The company released pictures showing how

the pizza warmers mounted to the reindeer's backs would work, as well as photos of reindeer training to be pizza-delivery deer on the grounds of a driving school in the icy city of Ishikari, Hokkaido.

A video posted to YouTube by Domino's Japan shows how the reindeer deliveries would work and how the company would use GPS trackers to follow the progress of the deliveries. The video reveals the plan still has some kinks, such as ensuring the pizza warmers remain affixed to the reindeer and preventing the animals from wandering dangerously into roads.

The company said it is still working on some other issues with the scheme, including ensuring the safety of any people or animals who encounter the reindeer and determining how the reindeer would be trained to walk long distances without accompaniment.



By Ben Hooper | Nov. 23, 2016 at 10:33 AM



An allegedly intoxicated man falls out of his moving pickup truck, which then runs over his leg.
Screenshot: Bradenton Herald

ORLANDO, Fla., Nov. 23 (UPI) -Police in Florida released
surveillance video showing an
alleged drink driver falling out of his
pickup truck and running over his
own leg.

The Florida Highway Patrol

released surveillance footage Monday showing William Edwards, 28, leaving the Dancer's Royale strip club in Orlando about 2:15 a.m. Oct. 25 and getting into his Ford pickup truck.

Club security said they tried to stop Edwards, a regular at the club, from driving because he had been drinking heavily.

The footage shows Edwards start to drive away with the door of the pickup ajar, but he quickly falls out the door and the truck runs over his leg.

The FHP said Edwards, apparently uninjured, ran away from the scene as the pickup truck rolled down the street, hit a ditch and rammed into a nearby home.

Adrean Larrea said his mother was sleeping in the home when the truck crashed into her room. She suffered minor injuries but did not require medical attention.

"If that ditch wasn't there, my mom would be in a funeral right now, underground," Larrea told WFTV. "They had to break the window to get in to turn off the car because the car was like smoking."

Investigators said they contacted Edwards, who left his driver's license at the club, and he turned himself in Oct. 31.

Edwards is facing a charge of leaving the scene of a crash.

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Passenger films as lightning strikes front of moving car

upi.com



Passenger films as lightning strikes front of moving car

By Ben Hooper | Nov. 29, 2016 at 9:46 AM Follow @oddnewsupi



Lightning strikes a car while a passenger films from inside. Screenshot: KC's random stuff/YouTube

WINDSOR, Ontario, Nov. 29 (UPI) -- A passenger in a car traveling on an Ontario road captured the moment the vehicle's front-end was struck by lightning while in motion.

The video, posted to YouTube by

user KC's random stuff, shows a passenger in the car filming the thunderstorm going on outside through the vehicle's windshield in Windsor.

A bolt of lightning strikes the front of the car, causing the occupants of the vehicle to cry out in shock before laughing at their close call.

"A friend and I were recording a thunderstorm," the driver wrote in the video's description. "This storm had already produced 2 tornadoes. Unexpectedly we were suddenly struck by lightning in the vehicle I was driving."

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'World's largest barbecue pit' arrives in Texas for massive Thanksgiving feast

upi.com



"The Undisputable Cuz," the world's largest barbecue pit, arrives in Galveston, Texas, to cook a massive Thanksgiving dinner. Screenshot: Salvation Army Galveston/YouTube

GALVESTON, Texas, Nov. 23 (UPI) -- A Salvation Army location in Texas is employing "the world's largest barbecue pit" to cook Thanksgiving dinner for about 1,200 people.

The Salvation Army of Galveston County shared video on YouTube of "The

Undisputable Cuz," which they described as "the world's largest barbecue pit," being pulled to the Galveston location by a semi trailer Tuesday.

Officials said the enormous barbecue will be used to smoke turkeys and hams to feed an expected 1,000 people at The Salvation Army's Center of Hope during a first-annual Thanksgiving celebration also slated to feature a bounce house, music, and "other fun in store."

The Salvation Army said the Cuz will also cook food to be delivered to about 200 "shut-ins" around the county.

"Special thanks to Dunn Heat Exchangers and Ken's Towing & Collision Center for making this possible!" The Salvation Army said.

Weighing up the evidence for the 'Historical Jesus'

theconversation.com

THE CONVERSATION December 14, 2014 10.06pm EST

The Conversation

The earliest sources only reference the clearly fictional 'Christ of Faith'. Charles Roffey/Flickr





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The earliest sources only reference the clearly fictional 'Christ of Faith'. Charles Roffey/Flickr

Did a man called Jesus of Nazareth walk the earth? Discussions over whether the figure known as the "Historical Jesus" actually existed primarily reflect disagreements among atheists.

Believers, who uphold the implausible and more easily-dismissed "Christ of Faith" (the divine Jesus who walked on water), ought not to get involved.

Numerous secular scholars have presented their own versions of the so-called "Historical Jesus" – and most of them are, as biblical scholar J.D. Crossan puts it, "an academic embarrassment".

From Crossan's view of Jesus as the wise sage, to Robert Eisenman's Jesus the revolutionary, and Bart Ehrman's apocalyptic prophet, about the only thing New Testament scholars seem to agree on is Jesus' historical existence. But can even that be questioned?

The first problem we encounter when trying to discover more about the Historical Jesus is the lack of early sources. The earliest sources only reference the clearly fictional Christ of Faith.

These early sources, compiled decades after the alleged events, all stem from Christian authors eager to promote Christianity – which gives us reason to question them. The authors of the Gospels fail to name themselves, describe their qualifications, or show any criticism with their foundational sources – which they also fail to identify.

Filled with mythical and non-historical information, and heavily edited over time, the Gospels certainly should not convince critics to trust even the more mundane claims made therein.

The methods traditionally used to tease out rare nuggets of truth from the Gospels are dubious.

The criterion of embarrassment says that if a section would be embarrassing for the author, it is more likely authentic. Unfortunately, given the diverse nature of Christianity and Judaism back then (things have not changed all that much), and the anonymity of the authors, it is impossible to

determine what truly would be embarrassing or counter-intuitive, let alone if that might not serve some evangelistic purpose.

The criterion of Aramaic context is similarly unhelpful. Jesus and his closest followers were surely not the only Aramaic-speakers in first-century Judea.

The criterion of multiple independent attestation can also hardly be used properly here, given that the sources clearly are not independent.

Paul's Epistles, written earlier than the Gospels, give us no reason to dogmatically declare Jesus must have existed. Avoiding Jesus' earthly events and teachings, even when the latter could have bolstered his own claims, Paul only describes his "Heavenly Jesus".

Even when discussing what appear to be the resurrection and the last supper, his only stated sources are his direct revelations from the Lord, and his indirect revelations from the Old Testament. In fact, Paul actually rules out human sources (see Galatians 1:11-12).

Also important are the sources we *don't* have. There are no existing eyewitness or contemporary accounts of Jesus. All we have are later descriptions of Jesus' life events by non-eyewitnesses, most of whom are obviously biased.

Little can be gleaned from the few non-Biblical and non-Christian sources, with only Roman scholar Josephus and historian Tacitus having any reasonable claim to be writing about Jesus within 100 years of his life.

And even those sparse accounts are shrouded in controversy, with disagreements over what parts have obviously been changed by Christian scribes (the manuscripts were preserved by Christians), the fact that both these authors were born after Jesus died (they would thus have probably received this information from Christians), and the oddity that centuries go by before Christian apologists start referencing them.

Agnosticism over the matter is already seemingly appropriate, and support for this position comes from independent historian Richard Carrier's recent defence of another theory. Namely, that the belief in Jesus started as the belief in a purely celestial being (who was killed by demons in an upper realm), who became historicised over time.

To summarise Carrier's 800-page tome, this theory and the traditional theory – that Jesus was a historical figure who became mythicised over time – both align well with the Gospels, which are later mixtures of obvious myth and what at least "sounds" historical.

The Pauline Epistles, however, overwhelmingly support the "celestial Jesus" theory, particularly with the passage indicating that demons killed Jesus, and would not have done so if they knew who he was (see: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10).

Humans – the murderers according to the Gospels – of course would still have killed Jesus, knowing full well that his death results in their salvation, and the defeat of the evil spirits.

So what do the mainstream (and non-Christian) scholars say about all this? Surprisingly very little; of substance anyway. Only Bart Ehrman and Maurice Casey have thoroughly attempted to prove Jesus' historical existence in recent times.

Their most decisive point? The Gospels can generally be trusted – after we ignore the many, many bits that are untrustworthy – because of the hypothetical (i.e. non-existent) sources behind them.

Who produced these hypothetical sources? When? What did they say? Were they reliable? Were they intended to be accurate historical portrayals, enlightening allegories, or entertaining fictions?

Ehrman and Casey can't tell you – and neither can any New Testament scholar.

Given the poor state of the existing sources, and the atrocious methods used by mainstream Biblical historians, the matter will likely never be resolved. In sum, there are clearly good reasons to doubt Jesus' historical existence – if not to think it outright improbable.

This article is part of The Conversation's End of Year series.

Editor's note: Raphael will be answering questions between 9 and 10am AEDT on Wednesday December 17. Ask your questions about historical Jesus in the comments below.

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White foam spills out of airplane hangar and on to California streets

BY: Scripps National Desk **POSTED:** 4:02 PM, Nov 18, 2016

UPDATED: 1 hour ago

Share Article

A giant blob of white foam has leaked out of California airplane hangar and onto nearby streets.

The cloud-like foam appears to be leaking from an airplane hangar at the Mineta San Jose International Airport. KRON-TV reports that foam is spilling out of the hangar owned by a company called Signature Flight Support.

The foam is believed to be part of a fire-fighting system, likely caused by a mechanical malfunction. No damage or injuries have been reported.



@TravisMFOX5

12:47 PM - 18 Nov 2016





Follow

We're livestreaming the growing foam blob in #SantaClara facebook.com/ktvu

12:45 PM - 18 Nov 2016

94 50

WPTV
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Some in the are have taken advantage by running into the foam or riding bikes through it. This, despite a warning from the San Jose fire department to not enter the foam because the substance is a known carcinogen.



Follow along with the latest via a live stream from WKBW.

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Woman 'slapped nightclub bouncer after trying to use pizza as ID' scot

scotsman.com

09:4509:56Thursday 24 November 2016

A Massachusetts woman reportedly slapped a nightclub bouncer after he refused to accept a slice of pizza as her form of identification.

The 21-year-old woman, said to be a college student, was asked for ID as she attempted to gain entry to the Monkey Bar and Grill in Amherst shortly after midnight last Thursday.

But the bouncer unsurprisingly refused to accept the slice of pizza, bought from nearby Antonio's Pizza, and the woman began arguing with him.

The situation reportedly escalated, and the woman slapped the bouncer, according to bar co-owner Rasif Rafiq, who spoke to the Daily Hampshire Gazette about the incident.

"It's definitely unexpected. It's funny, and has given us a few laughs, and we hope it has given other people laughs," Rafiq said.

Rafiq, 29, gave an account of the incident, recalling: "[The woman] said, 'Just let me in.' And [the bouncer] said, 'You're too intoxicated. I'm sorry."

Despite his comments, Rafiq insisted that he was taking the alleged assault on the bouncer seriously, but did say the doorman was not badly hurt.

A police report in the Daily Hampshire Gazette suggested the woman had been served with a trespass notice warning her to stay away from the club.

A Facebook post written in the aftermath of the incident read: "Despite some popular misconceptions, Monkey Bar does not currently accept Antonio's Pizza as a valid form of ID. Sorry for the inconvenience."

Rafiq said he hoped the incident wouldn't affect the woman too much, adding: "We've all had nights like this in college. That's sort of the mantra of the Monkey Bar - we're all monkeys, and monkeys do wild things sometimes.

"We give her an 'A' for effort, and wish her all the best," Rafiq said.

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'WOMAN IN BLACK' strikes again: Ghost hunter spots 'spirit of old maid' in haunted hall

express.co.uk



'WOMAN IN BLACK' strikes again: **Ghost hunter spots 'spirit of old** maid' in haunted hall

A GHOST hunter claims to have

spotted the spirit of a 'woman in black' in a haunted hall.

PUBLISHED: 00:00, Fri, Nov 25, 2016 | UPDATED: 11:17, Fri, Nov 25, 2016





MERCURY

A ghost hunter claims to have spotted a 'woman in black' spirit in a haunted hall in Bradford

Julie Cockroft, 55, was with her Equinox Paranormal Research UK team at the 14th century Bolling Hall, Bradford, thought to be one of the most haunted buildings in West Yorkshire.

When a member of her team said they saw the ghostly apparition of an 'old maid' in an apron near the end of the tour, Julie decided to seize the

opportunity to see what she could capture.

To her surprise, after calling all the guests out of the building she took three pictures of the empty stairwell - only for the figure of a woman to appear in the third one.

The haunting image appears to show a clear hand on the bannister, with fingers clinging to the rail and a woman in black making her way down the stairs.

In the following two pictures Ms Cockroft took, the woman was gone.

Ms Cockroft, from Wakefield, West Yorkshire, said: "I take three pictures at a time to compare them just in case, so that I can always check to see what differences there are between the images.

The ghost was spotted in one of the most haunted buildings in West Yorkshire

But spotting this certainly doesn't scare me off investigating

Julie Cockroft

"One member of our team said they had seen a woman in black on the stairs. So I said right, let's all go to the door so that there was only me there.

"I took the three photos just like usual and there she was. I didn't see anything with my own eyes at all near the stairs.



MERCURY

"I thought it was fantastic, as suspected paranormal pictures go, it's a really good picture.

Julie Cockroft was with her Equinox Paranormal Research UK team

"The quest who saw the woman said she had a white apron on around her waist and a black dress underneath.

"It does look possibly like an old servant or maid. But I have no idea really.

"I have sent it to many experts who have seen all kinds of paranormal photos and have even analysed it on their expensive machinery and they say it's definitely a ghost hand that you can see on the stairs. Everyone say it's fantastic.



MERCURY

The 14th century Bolling Hall in Bradford, West Yorkshire

"[On the night], people had seen lots of orbs and heard lots of noises and voices etc, but no one else has come forward to say they caught anything on camera.

"But spotting this certainly doesn't scare me off investigating - quite the opposite, it makes me want to do more.

"The picture is pretty high up in terms of pictures of the paranormal. I have been told by so-called 'experts' that it's one of the best they have ever seen.

"What you have to do is really try to debunk every picture before you put it out there and say 'look at this'. You can't just put any old rubbish out there.

"But that's exactly what we did here. No one was in the building at all when we took the picture, we had brought everyone out of the front door. Even the staff were stood behind me at the front door.

"If it is a person and not something paranormal then they have a terrible skin condition on their hand, that's for sure."

Bolling Hall is regarded as one of the most 'active' buildings in Yorkshire and has featured on numerous TV shows including Most Haunted with Yvette Fielding and Derek Acorah.

During the English Civil War, the hall was a stronghold for the Royalist cause in 1643 and legend has it a ghost appeared to one of the commanders to tell him to 'pity poor Bradford'.

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Woman tries to complain about rotten courgette to Lidl – gets it painfully wrong

By Joshua Barrie 13:35, 24 NOV 2016 Updated 18:40, 24 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Woman tries to complain about 'rotten' courgette to Lidl – gets it spectacularly wrong

The woman claims her veg had a "dreadful smell" and "needed it for dinner"



Shoppers don't want rotten vegetables (Photo: Getty)

Rotten courgettes are the worst. They're slimy and smelly, like seaweed hanging from an abandoned wetsuit.

Nobody wants them, yet it seems one unfortunate shopper discovered she'd accidentally bought a dodgy vegetable from a Lidl supermarket in Yeovil, Somerset.

The unnamed woman claims to have only found out of her rotten courgette after cutting into it at dinner time.

She did as many others would do, and vented her frustration on Facebook. Her plan was to complain to Lidl directly.

Things went a little wrong, however, and the unlucky lady instead messaged a cover band in Donegal, Ireland, called ' *Lidyl Experience* '.

Band member Liam Mac Hollaoidh shared the missive on Twitter.

The Lidl shopper wrote: "I have today bought a courgette from Lidyl (sic) in Yeovil and when slicing it found it rotten to the core with a dreadful smell.

"I needed this for dinner tonight and have no chance of returning it as Lidyl in Yeovil is 12 miles from where I live.

"I know it was only 36p but better in my purse than theirs."

We don't know what the woman ended up doing for dinner. We hope she didn't go hungry. She shared a photo of her alleged courgette with Lidyl Experience. It looks ghastly.

Liam added: "We promised her a song to make up for it."

A spokesman for the real Lidl said: "We were very sorry to hear of this incident and would like to urge the customer to contact us via our online contact form or on 0370 444 1234.

"We would like to reassure customers that this is an isolated incident and that we have thorough procedures in place to ensure that our products are of the highest quality."

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WWII Mystery: Are 'Missing' Sailors Actually in NY Cemetery?

2016-11-20 go.com

· By chris carola, associated press

Nov 20, 2016, 5:30 PM ET



The Associated Press

It's a confounding mystery of World War II: What happened to the 136 missing sailors from the explosion and sinking of the USS Turner?

After all, the ship did not go down in battle or even in the open sea, but while anchored near New York Harbor in 1944, so close to the city that shockwaves from the onboard munitions blasts shattered windows in some buildings.

Now, newly discovered documents show that the remains of four of the missing sailors were indeed found and buried not long after the disaster in separate graves for unknowns in a Long Island veterans cemetery.

And the researcher who found the documents suspects many more remains could have been found and buried along with them in those same simple gravesites, marked only with the words "Unknown U.S. Sailor" and "January 3, 1944," the day the destroyer sank.

"Just don't throw them in the ground and forget about them," said military historian Ted Darcy, who is turning over his findings to the Pentagon. "These guys have been neglected by our government. It's not fair, especially to their families."

Darcy's hope is that the military will exhume the four gravesites, identify the remains and rebury them with a proper memorial.

The Pentagon still officially lists 136 Turner sailors as missing. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, the federal office responsible for recovering and identifying the nation's missing war dead, didn't respond to repeated requests from The Associated Press about Darcy's findings.

The Turner, a 10-month-old destroyer returning from convoy duty in the Atlantic, was anchored a few miles off Sandy Hook, New Jersey, when an explosion erupted below deck, setting much of the ship ablaze. More explosions followed, the last breaking the ship in two.

While no cause of the initial blast was ever determined, a Navy report mentioned anti-submarine munitions were being defused around the time.

More than 150 men were rescued, but 136 others went down with the ship, according to Darcy's research. He said the Navy's National Archives file on the yearlong salvage operation contains no information, including how many sets of remains were eventually recovered from the 55 feet of

water where the ship sank. Darcy contends many of the bodies would have likely been intact on the ship in compartments sealed with watertight doors.

According to 1944 interment records for the Long Island veterans cemetery in Farmingdale, the remains of four Turner sailors were buried in individual graves within a year of the disaster.

But Darcy, a retired Marine from Locust Grove, Virginia, believes all or most of the remains were found and comingled in the four graves. "I went to the Navy and they said, 'Hey, we don't know how many are in there," he said.

Darcy said comingling of unidentified remains was a fairly common practice, particularly when the Navy was overburdened at the height of World War II. The Long Island cemetery has multiple graves containing the remains of more than one WWII serviceman, while the remains of 388 USS Oklahoma crewmembers disinterred in 2015 for identification were buried in 45 mass graves in Hawaii.

Another WWII MIA expert, Mark Noah, founder of Florida-based History Flight, said he "wouldn't doubt it at all" if Turner graves contained the remains of multiple sailors. "Skeletal remains can pack out a full coffin with more than a dozen people," he said.

Loved ones from the Turner disaster were initially told only that their sailor was missing. If remains had been found and buried, they were never informed.

"Oh, my goodness. I would've liked to have known that," 82-year-old Marjorie Avery, of Corsicana, Texas, told the AP by phone. Her father, Henry S. Wygant Jr., was the Turner's captain and still officially listed as missing.

Several relatives of now-deceased Turner sailors who survived the disaster told the AP their loved ones also were never told about the graves. Two of the last Turner survivors still living — James Thomas, of Leivasy, West Virginia, and Robert Mowry, of Irwin, Pennsylvania — also said they didn't know.

More than 70 years later, their memories of the disaster remain clear yet tinged with stoicism typical of so many WWII veterans.

"It's just one of those things that happen in a war," said Mowry, 91. "It was just us at the wrong place at the wrong time, that's all."

Associated Press investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

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This undated photo provided by San Diego State University shows a newly discovered rare plant that researches have named after famed rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix. The plant, found in Baja California, Mexico, has been christened Dudleya hendrixii, or "Hendrix's liveforever." Liveforevers are a type of succulent with long lifespans. This one is a stalky plant less than a foot tall with pinkish-white flowers that dies in summer and resprouts in fall. The blossoms are tiny; the white flower at right is about a half-inch in diameter. (Stephen McCabe/San Diego State University

via AP)

SAN DIEGO (AP) — California researchers have named a newly discovered rare plant after Jimi Hendrix.

The plant, found in Baja California, Mexico, has been christened Dudleya hendrixii, or "Hendrix's liveforever."

Liveforevers are a kind of succulent with enormous lifespans.

This one is a stalky plant less than a foot tall with pinkish-white flowers that dies in summer and resprouts in fall.

San Diego State University says a former graduate student, Mark Dodero, discovered the plant — supposedly while listening to Hendrix's song "Voodoo Child."

The university says Dodero and Stephen McCabe of the University of California, Santa Cruz, decided to name it for the late rock guitarist.

However, unlike Hendrix's music, the plant is in peril. San Diego State says its two-acre habitat is threatened by farming, off-road vehicles and development.

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Rome bans gladiators and rickshaws (again)



Centurions pose for a picture. Photo: Filippo Monteforte/AFP

The Local 2 December 2016 17:18 CET+01:00

Rome mayor Virginia Raggi has passed a regulation banning 'gladiators' and rickshaws from the city - and not for the first time.

A photo with one of Rome's costumed gladiators (which is what they call themselves most of the time, despite usually dressing as Roman centurions) may seem like harmless fun, but city authorities have sought to crack down the

practice after a string of complaints accusing the actors of overcharging or even pick-pocketing unsuspecting travellers.

The ban targets anyone portraying a historical subject - centurions are specifically singled out - in photographs or videos in return for cash.

Anyone caught flouting it faces a €400 fine, and authorities said the regulation was necessary in order to "protect public order" and safeguard the city's "cultural, artistic and monumental heritage".

Another regulation targets rickshaws, banning any vehicle used for transporting people and using an electric motor - even if it is partially powered by pedals. The prohibition applies to the entire city, but particularly "the historic centre and major tourist attractions".

These latest bans replace an earlier regulation which had expired on November 30th, prompting the gladiators to return to the city.

"In Verona, characters pay €10 in order to occupy land for a day; there's an online application and then they're allowed to work," one of the centurions, a father of two who lost his job in sales, told Il Corriere on Thursday. "Why isn't that possible in Rome?"

Rome first decided to crack down on the unauthorized gladiators - whom authorities say make up to €12,000 a month charging tourists for holiday snaps - in November last year, when the city commissioner introduced an initial ban.

Updating these regulations was one of the first things Raggi did after her election, imposing the €400 fines in her very first council meetings.

So why does Rome have such a problem with the centurions?

One of the main issues is that the gladiators often aren't clear that that there's a charge for a photo with them, and while most savvy tourists manage to talk them down to a reasonable price, some are conned out of large amounts for a photo - particularly if they haven't worked out the conversion rate of their currency into euro.

Sometimes the methods used are even more clandestine. A viral video in the summer showed a Romanian TV crew getting their wallets stolen by a group of Colosseum centurions who took €100 as compensation for a couple of photos in front of Rome's most iconic building.

In the video, the Romanian film crew ask the onlooking police to help them get their money back but the forces of the law advise them it's better not to take action..

The new regulation is valid until the end of July 2017, and anyone caught flouting it could face a €400 fine.

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Hoards of Santas invade London for annual Christmas pub crawl

Revellers dressed in Father Christmas costumes take part in Santacon (Picture: AFP/Getty Images)

There were quite a lot of Santas running around London today.

It wasn't the start of a dystopian future where Father Christmas clones had taken over, but rather an annual festive event.

It involved people across the world dressing up as the icon to go on a massive pub crawl.

The London version was as lively as ever, with pictures showing a sea of Santas descending on the capital.

Before people were allowed on the barhopping tour

they had to agree to several rules though.

They of course had to dress as Father Christmas, which meant putting on more than just a hat



Santa Con 2016 Camden start (Picture: WENN)

Participants were required to get details from fellow Santas just in case they got lost

Santas descend onto the streets of East London (Picture: fameflynet.uk.com)

The Santas were advised to bring cash to pay for the booze so they didn't hold up the queue

They're going drinking (Picture: fameflynet.uk.com) The annual Santacon through central London with hundreds of people dressed as Santa, Reindeer and Elves (Picture: Rex)

And apparently they were told not to get drunk, which is a rule that will definitely (not) be followed

Revellers dressed in Santa suits push each other round on a small bicycle outside Euston railway station in London (Picture: PA)

It wasn't just London getting taken over by the legion of Santas.

A version of the pub crawl will be held in 380 cities in the United States and 51 countries, according to SantaCon.info.



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School board official avoids trial in frozen fish assault

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 6, 2016

Asso

Pres SAUGUS, Mass. (AP) — A member of a Massachusetts town's school committee charged with assaulting a man with frozen fish patties has been ordered to attend anger management classes.

The Daily Item of Lynn reports (http://bit.ly/2gLoWLL) that 67-year-old Arthur Grabowski was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. He was accused of hitting 73-year-old Martin Graney with a bag of frozen fish patties during an argument at a veterans' food drive at the Saugus Senior Center in May.

Both men said the other man was the aggressor.

Grabowski, a member of the Saugus School Committee, was scheduled to go on trial this month, but he agreed to take anger management classes. The case was continued without a finding for six months and the charge will be dismissed if he complies with court orders.

Information from: The (Lynn, Mass.) Daily Item, http://itemlive.com

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Science has measured all of humanity's 'stuff' and it's absolutely enormous

mnn.com

Michael d'Estries December 7, 2016, 3:22 p.m.

As anyone who has ever loaded up a moving van can tell you, most humans own a lot of stuff. We're good at creating it, too: from laptops to phones, roads and cars, buildings and homes. All of it, everything that humans have constructed on the planet, is called the technosphere. And no surprise, it's getting bigger.

In a new study published in The Anthropocene Review, University of Leicester geologist Mark Williams and his international colleagues have estimated for the first time the sheer size of the technosphere. When all of humanity's objects — from pens to keyboards to space rockets — is totaled, it all weighs an estimated 30 trillion tons or a mass of 50 kilos (110 pounds) for every square meter of the Earth's surface.

"The technosphere can be said to have budded off the biosphere and arguably is now at least partly parasitic on it," Williams said in a release. "At its current scale the technosphere is a major new phenomenon of this planet — and one that is evolving extraordinarily rapidly."

Unlike the biosphere, however, the technosphere in its current state is extremely poor at recycling its own waste. As such, its weight is increasingly growing, with greater pressures on the biosphere to extract more and more resources to keep it flowing. The evidence isn't just in the growing number of garage sales on your street, but also in time-lapse satellite images of growing city sprawl from around the globe, which you can see in the video below.

According to coauthor and geologist Jan Zalasiewicz, all of this waste is leaving behind "technofossils," buried layers of humanity's impact that will one day define the Anthropocene Era.

"The far-future paleontologists who will (we will assume) reconstruct, from these infinitely variable petrified remnants, the technosphere built by humans, will move, inch by inch, across these fossilized landfills, as not only the objects but also their aspects change their nature, centimetre by centimetre," he said. "A square meter might include such complexity and variety as to provide work for a lifetime of such study."

Whether or not humanity's insatiable drive for stuff will allow future generations to even exist to contemplate this era remains to be seen. Human biomass alone currently is more than double that of all large terrestrial vertebrates that characterized the Earth prior to human civilization. We all love the things that make life comfortable, but without some drastic changes in resource consumption and recycling, it's clear that the technosphere and humanity will be nothing more than a short-lived layer in the geologic record.

"The technosphere may be geologically young, but it is evolving with furious speed, and it has already left a deep imprint on our planet," Zalasiewicz added.

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'Seeing eye camel' acts as guide for blind horse at zoo

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 8, 2016

 P_{Pres} WINSLOW, Maine (AP) — A horse and a camel at a Maine petting zoo have formed an unlikely friendship.

The 5-year-old camel, Caesar, at the Pony X-Press Zoo in Winslow has become a guide for Dolly the horse, who is blind.

The zoo's Ed Papsis tells WGME-TV (http://bit.ly/2hk6xGY) Dolly's probably the only horse with "a seeing eye camel."

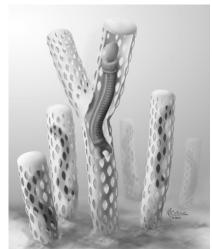
He says Caesar needed the company of another animal and Dolly needed a guide, so the two were put together and they bonded. Dolly relies on the camel and follows him around. She whinnys for him if he's not nearby and he bellows back for her.

Information from: WGME-TV, http://www.wgme.com

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Early marine worm built dwellings so strange they mistaken for a seaweed

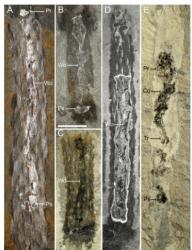
• By Jennifer Frazer on December 8, 2016



Credit: Marianne Collins Nanglu et al. 2016

Long before sharks, there was the shark cage. Newly discovered fossils indicate the defense devices were invented 500 million years ago by an enterprising marine worm whose fortifications are so unusual they have long been mistaken for a seaweed. Eat your heart out, Discovery Channel.

At least, that is the conclusion of a new study published in July in the journal *BMC Biology* of fossils from a stunning new locality of the Burgess Shale called Marble Canyon in Canada's Kootenay National Park. After discovering, among hundreds of new specimens, dozens of fossils showing the worm in question hanging out inside the alleged seaweed, scientists from Canada and the United Kingdom -- including famed Burgess Shale expert Simon Conway Morris -- decided to re-evaluate the prevailing wisdom.

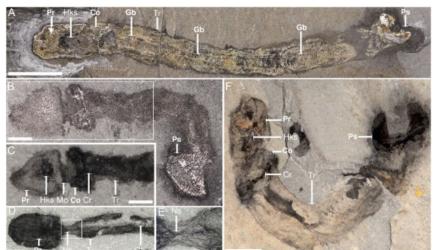


Fossils showing worms inside the "alga" *Margaretia*. Wo=worm, Ps=posterior structure, Pr= proboscis, co=collar, tr=trunk. Credit: Nanglu et al. 2016

If the seaweed is indeed a worm cage, it means the worm jumps from being a rare member of this extremely ancient animal community to one of the most common. That's because the fossils of its tube, formerly considered to be the alga *Margaretia*, are found all over the world, while the worms' fossils are found only in Canada. Further, the fossils may be helpful to understanding our own evolution because based on these new specimens, scientists have newly

identified the worm as a close relation to vertebrates with many living descendants. We talked about them here recently: acorn worms.

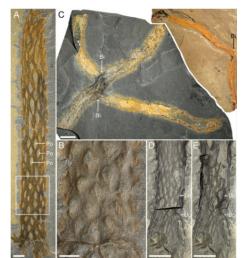
As I wrote in October, modern acorn worms posses a distinctive anatomy of proboscis, collar, and trunk. The appearance of the proboscis sitting inside the collar is what gives them their name.



The acorn worm *Oesia*. Pr= proboscis, co=collar, tr=trunk, Gb= gill bars, Ps=posterior structure. Credit: Nanglu et al. 2016

Unlike modern acorn worms, however, the fossil worm sometimes seems to have had a bulbous, forked rear end that it may have used to grasp and maneuver around its cage. Additionally, *Oesia*, as the worm is called, seems to have had many more of the gill bars modern worms use to breathe, perhaps because the worm was also using them to filter food from the water.

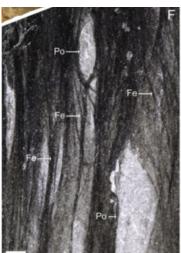
The cage-dwelling worms – fittingly, perhaps -- seem to have preferred the single life. In worm+cage fossils, only one worm has been found per dwelling. However, since many fossils are broken, it's possible that they sometimes had roommates. It does seem to have been a roomy cage: the tube was usually twice the width of the worm, yielding a capacious living space with plenty of room to move. The tubes occasionally branched.



Oesia tube structures. Po=pore, Bi=bifurcation. D-E a chunk of fossil has broken off in D and is replaced in E to show the inner and outer surface of the tube. Lo=lower surface of tube, Up=upper surface of tube. Credit: Nanglu et al. 2016

In the walls of the tube was a spirally arranged series of pores with raised edges, about 10 per revolution. Some were nearly blocked, but others could be as wide as one-third the tube width. Some fossil tubes with irregular shapes whose pores do not spiral have been found, and these may have been anchors that extended horizontally under the seabed. The top end of the tube seems to have been closed, providing complete home security, but necessarily restricting social engagements.

The tube itself seems to have been made of tiny fibers either braided or bundled together.





Close up of the fibers that form *Oesia* tubes. Po=pores, Fe=fibrous elements. Credit: Nanglu et al. 2016

The combination of a fibrous superstructure and a pore manifold makes the tube unlike the structure of any known algae of the era. Thus, the authors conclude that it is less likely that the worm was simply living inside a seaweed than a worm building a structure that bears a vague resemblance to one.

Since the pores perforate the entire tube, the scientists suggest they stood upright. Given that the largest was more than 20 inches (50 cm) long, if this is correct they would have rivaled the tallest known Burgess Shale sponges. Lofty, perforated cages combined with extensive gills seems to indicate these worms were filter feeders that

sifted food particles from water much the same way whales use baleen, using their cages as a safe perch in which to access faster moving (and thus more food-rich) water further from the sea floor. The pores would have allowed food and oxygen to enter and waste products to exit, while the cage would have deterred predators.

However, many *Oesia* worms were found without tubes and many tubes without worms. Why? One possibility is that they're in those tubes, we just can't see them. The worms may still be inside, but hidden unless the fossil is split open or the tube cage partially decayed prior to burial.

There are some other scenarios, however. It's possible worms could live with or without cages. Or perhaps there was a mass evacuation following some sort of traumatic event, although the lack of any obvious escape hatch makes this less likely, the authors concede. Most likely, the tubes simply broke and the worms floated away prior to fossilization.

Previously, *Oesia* had only been found at the classic Walcott Quarry Burgess Shale site – famously discovered by Charles Doolittle Walcott in 1909 -- and it was rare there. At Marble Canyon, though, *Oesia* is abundant. The former *Margaretia* is found in Burgess shale sites around the world: British Columbia; Utah: southern China; and Siberia. This suggests acorn worms were an important member of the Cambrian community.

Today, most acorn worms feed in and on sediment rather than filtering water, but these fossils suggest that sediment feeding came later and supports the idea that filter feeding was the ancestral condition of all deuterostomes, a vast group of animals that includes the vertebrates, the echinoderms (starfish, etc.) and the acorn worms and their relatives. Why did they switch? Perhaps as predators grew larger and more heavily

armed, *Oesia* found their convenient, attractive, and spacious – but breakable -- filter-feeding high rises were no longer sufficient to the job of compound security, and they gradually abandoned them for the comparative safety of the seabed.

Reference

Nanglu, Karma, Jean-Bernard Caron, Simon Conway Morris, and Christopher B. Cameron. "Cambrian suspension-feeding tubicolous hemichordates." *BMC Biology* 14, no. 1 (2016): 56.

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The battle over Sofia Vergara's embryos took an extraordinary turn Tuesday — when a right-to-live lawsuit was filed on behalf of the fertilized eggs against their mom.

The female embryos are listed as plaintiffs "Emma" and "Isabella" in Louisiana court papers, which come amid Vergara's knock-down, drag-out legal battle with former fiancé Nick Loeb, sources told The Post.

Loeb had already sued the "Modern Family" star in California for custody of the embryos, which the couple created when they were still together in 2013.

The potentially landmark new case in Louisiana — a traditionally pro-life state that offers special legal protections for frozen embryos — also lists the embryos' "trustee," James Charbonnet, as a plaintiff, sources said.

The lawsuit contends that Emma and Isabella, by not being born, have been deprived of an inheritance from a trust that has been created for them in Louisiana, according to sources.

It asks that the frozen embryos be given to Loeb so that they can live and receive the trust set up for them, which would fund, among other things, their health care and education, the sources said.

The suit accuses Vergara of refusing "to allow her daughters Emma and Isabella to continue their development, so they remain frozen in a tank," sources said.

It also contends that a contract that Vergara and Loeb previously signed at the ART Reproductive Center in Beverly Hills should be voided since it violated California code and Louisiana law, according to sources.



Nick Loeb and Sofia Vergara in happier times in 2014 Photo: Getty Images

Modal Trigger

The contract said neither party could use the embryos without the consent of the other. But the lawsuit argues that it didn't say what should happen if Loeb and Vergara were to split.

Vergara also bullied Loeb into signing one part of the agreement saying that if either or both of them died, the embryos were to be "thawed with no further action taken," according to sources, citing the suit.

Loeb, a 41-year-old businessman, spends his

time between New York and Florida but has ties to Louisiana. He graduated from Tulane University in New Orleans and still serves as a reserve police officer in the state, according to sources.

In 2013, the then-happy couple first turned to in vitro fertilization to have a child of their own.

The new court filing says that on March 4, 2013, Loeb and Vergara exchanged messages about the embryos after learning they had created five, sources said.

Modal Trigger



Nick Loeb and Sofía Vergara in happier times in 2014 Photo: Getty Images Photo: Getty Images Sofía Vergara and husband Joe Manganiello, who wed in 2015 Photo: VF14/WireImage Photo: VF14/WireImage

"You can't keep 4 frozen lives forever or kill them, we will go to hell," Loeb wrote to her, sources said.

"We r going to hell regardless," Vergara responded, according to sources. During the same conversation, the actress told him, "I'm doing it because I want you to have a baby," sources said, citing the lawsuit.

Two rounds of IVF failed, and they created two more embryos later that year.

But then Loeb and Vergara split on May 13, 2014, while he was at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, sources said.

After they broke up, Loeb sent texts to Vergara — including one that said, "We still have those 2 frozen babys," sources said.

VF14/WireImage The new court papers insist that Vergara was adamant during her relationship with Loeb that, as a Catholic, she believed the embryos should never be destroyed — and she has since broken their oral agreement, according to sources.

Vergara's refusal to allow the eggs to be implanted in a surrogate has left them "in suspended animation," the suit says, according to sources.

Loeb filed to protect the embryos in California just a few months after they split.

But the court documents say he dropped that lawsuit Tuesday, after a California judge ruled in favor of Vergara, 44, in her quest to force Loeb to identify two previous lovers who underwent abortions after he impregnated them, according to sources.

He had appealed the decision but was turned down by an appellate court.

Loeb previously told Page Six, "I would rather go to jail than reveal the names."

The new lawsuit says Loeb should have full custody over the embryos and "authority to release them for transfer, continued development, and birth," the sources said.

It also insists that the actress should pay for any of the fees Loeb has incurred to keep Emma and - Isabella frozen, sources said.

Modal Trigger

Vergara — who last year married "Magic Mike" actor Joe Manganiello, 39 — has previously said children should be the product of a loving relationship. She has a son from another relationship.

Her lawyer, Fred Silberberg, has said the actress wants to keep the embryos "frozen indefinitely."



Sofía Vergara and husband 2015 Photo: VF14/WireImage

"I wouldn't want to bring kids to the world where it's already set against them," Vergara has explained.

The actress has said the contract that both she and Loeb signed should be the end of the story.

In an April 2015 Op-Ed in The New York Times, Loeb outlined why he wants to protect the embryos.

"A woman is entitled to bring a pregnancy to term even if the man objects," Loeb wrote. "Shouldn't a man who is willing to take on all parental responsibilities be similarly entitled to bring his embryos to term even if the woman objects?"

Joe Manganiello, who wed in Vergara's rep couldn't immediately be reached. Loeb didn't respond to a request for comment.

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Someone dyed a white dog pink and abandoned it on the street

Ashitha Nagesh for Metro.co.ukTuesday 13 Dec 2016 1:08 pm

http://metro.co.uk/2016/12/13/someone-dyed-a-white-dog-pink-and-abandoned-it-on-the-street-6320066/



The dog has been vomiting (Picture: CEN)

Someone dyed a white-coloured stray dog pink and then abandoned it, causing the animal to vomit repeatedly.

Photos of the dog posted online have sparked outrage among locals, as well as a police investigation. Local spotted the animal in the central Russian city of Izhevsk, in Udmurt Republic, and reported it to animal welfare workers.

'I got the information about the dog from witnesses in our group on social media,' volunteer Vera Ivanova said.

'So, I went there to check it out and the dog was indeed there.'



The dog was found in Izhevsk, central Russia (Picture: CEN)

Vera approached the dog, who has since been nicknamed 'Pink Elephant', and put it in her car before driving it to the local dog shelter.

Once there, other volunteers teamed up to wash the dog and get its fur back to its normal white colour. 'The dye is slowly washing off,' Vera said. 'The dog visually looks healthy, but it has been vomiting. Maybe this is due to the fact that it was recently dyed.'

According to local media, officers are now hunting those responsible. Once found, they may face animal cruelty charges.

Squirrels In Toronto Can't Stop Attacking Christmas Lights

atlasobscura.com



A devious squirrel plots his next attack. Laszlo llyes/CC BY-SA 2.0 Laszlo llyes/CC BY-SA 2.0

Every year, the residents of North York, Toronto look forward to the holidays, when the trees around the skating rink in Mel Lastman Square are draped with festive lights.

That is, at least, until said festive lights start winking out, strand by strand. It happened in 2014, leaving the rink completely dark, and again in 2015, when they had to bring cherry pickers in to fix things. This year, though, the city thinks they've found the culprit.

"I believe it totally has to do with one or

more squirrels who perhaps don't like Christmas," City Councilor John Filion told *CBC News*. The squirrels chew through the strands of lights, he explains, presumably as part of their own holiday celebrations.

The city plans to install large, colorful floodlights this year, down at ground level where they'll be less interesting to the squirrels. Your move, tree grinches.

Every day, we track down a fleeting wonder—something amazing that's only happening right now. Have a tip for us? Tell us about it! Send your temporary miracles to cara@atlasobscura.com.

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Starving for Answers

Article #369 • written by Erika Nesvold

In early 1945, 36 American men lay in their bunks in a windowless room, each man alone with his thoughts as he tried to fall asleep despite the hunger that gnawed at his gut. Just a few weeks earlier, they had all been fit, healthy young men, eager to serve their country. But then their overseers had decreed that their rations were to be cut in half, and the men assigned to feed them had shown no mercy. Now they were so weak from hunger that they could barely roll over in their bunks. During the day, they tried to smile and laugh with each other to keep their spirits up, but at night the depression that accompanied starvation seeped in, telling them to give in, to give up. But the men soldiered on, despite the fact that they were not actually soldiers at all: they were pacifists who had volunteered to be starved for the sake of science.

In 1943—over a year before the starvation study began—the USA was struggling through its second year of fighting in World War 2. But Dr. Ancel Keys' career was thriving. Not only had he accepted a position as head of the newly-established Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene at the University of Minnesota, but his work was being funded by the deep pockets of the U.S. Army. This support was thanks to Dr. Keys' development of the infamous "K ration," a pocket-sized packet of food containing 2,830 calories, 33 grams of protein, and most of the vitamins a soldier needed in a day. Despite its unpopularity amongst soldiers due to its overuse, Army officials had been so impressed with the K ration that they named Keys a special assistant to the Secretary of War and encouraged his research on the effects of nutrition and deprivation on the human body. It wasn't just money that the Army was throwing Keys' way—they also provided him a steady source of healthy, young volunteers for his studies, drawn from the ranks of America's conscientious objectors. These young men had refused to participate in combat due to their pacifist beliefs, and instead served their country through activities like firefighting, caring for the mentally ill, and maintaining National Parks as members of the Civilian Public Service, or CPS. Dr. Keys used them as free lab rats to study vitamin deficiencies, thirst, and heat stress.



Dr. Ancel Keys (Wikipedia)

Maintaining morale among the CPS volunteers proved challenging. They had registered as conscientious objectors in the face of skepticism and derision from friends and neighbors. They had volunteered for uncomfortable and even painful medical procedures to advance humanity's understanding of the human body. They withstood extreme levels of cold, heat, moisture, and thirst in the pursuit of science. One experiment required volunteers to stay in bed for a month. Others measured the harmful effects of the absence of various vitamins in the volunteers' diets. But all of the experiments they suffered through seemed to have only one purpose: to produce a stronger, fitter American soldier who could stay in the fight as long as possible. As much as the volunteers wanted to serve their country, this chafed against the pacifism they had already sacrificed so much for.

One of Keys' lab assistants, Harold Guetzkow, a conscientious objector himself, sensed the increasing disgruntlement amongst the volunteers and approached Keys. As it turned out, Keys had also been growing restless with his experiments. While his work was contributing to the war effort, he wondered whether his research could serve a larger purpose: addressing the looming food crisis in Europe. The war was ravaging the landscape of Europe, destroying crops and rendering huge swathes of land unfarmable for the foreseeable future. Millions of people would soon be living in a state of famine. Assuming the Allies were successful in retaking Europe from the enemy—and that was a big assumption—the responsibility for refeeding millions of people would soon fall to the Allied militaries, and probably most heavily on the U.S. Army.

But the science of starvation was not well understood. What does a lack of calories do to the heart, the bones, the victim's mental state? More practically, what is the best technique for refeeding a starving person—slowly increasing their intake of calories, or providing them with as much food as they can gobble down? Is it important to administer supplements of vitamins or protein as they slowly regain their weight? Keys realized that he was in the perfect position to answer all these questions. He had a lab, he had plenty of volunteers, and he had the financial support of the US Army. As a bonus, the conscientious objectors that Keys would be starving for science would be motivated by the thought of starving children overseas, rather than the idea of helping the Army kill more people.

The Army approved Keys' proposal for a year-long, comprehensive starvation study to begin in late 1944. Keys distributed a recruitment brochure to CPS posts across the country calling for volunteers, emblazoned with the title, "Will You Starve That They Be Better Fed?" Over two hundred conscientious objectors volunteered for Keys' experiment. He selected 36, choosing single men of average weight and excellent physical and mental health. In particular, Keys screened for men who could put up with the stresses and cramped quarters of the experiment, and who expressed enthusiasm for overseas relief efforts. He didn't want frustrated, unmotivated volunteers stirring resentment in the ranks or quitting partway through the experiment.



A recruitment brochure for the study

The 36 volunteers walked into Keys' laboratory under the university's football stadium on 19 November 1944. They all bunked together in a single windowless barracks in the lab, but they were allowed to travel around town and even to participate in university classes and activities. In fact, the human guinea pigs (as they called themselves) were required to walk at least 22 miles per week, although later in the experiment, all excursions had to include the presence of a "buddy" to discourage cheating. There was only one rule: the men could only eat the food provided by the laboratory, every gram of which was weighed and recorded before being portioned out to the volunteers.

During the first twelve weeks of the experiment—the Control Phase—the subjects were measured, weighed, poked, and prodded to determine their baseline health, weight, and calorie consumption. The men felt good. They were proud of the work they were doing, even though the real work hadn't

yet begun. They reveled in their long walks along the river to complete the required weekly 22 miles. A friendly competition sprung up among the subjects as the researchers tested their physical endurance with grueling runs on a treadmill. After a twenty minute uphill walk, each man was required to run at seven miles per hour on an uphill incline for five minutes, or until they collapsed. Twelve of the men were able to brag after the first test that they had lasted the entire five minutes.

Dr. Keys even brought in speakers and instructors to provide the men with 25 hours of instruction a week on sociology, political science, and language. This "relief academy" was meant to prepare the men to travel overseas to help the relief efforts in Europe, after the experiment and the war were over. It also helped to keep them entertained during the early portions of the experiment, and enabled the researchers to track their subjects' anticipated mental deterioration later in the year.

Some of the men took advantage of the free university tuition and took classes in French and law. One guinea pig joined a five-act campus theater production of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* ("*The Middle-Class Aristocrat*").

All too soon, the Control Phase ended and the Starvation Phase began. For the next 24 weeks, the volunteers' calories were cut in half, and their health, mental state, and weight were continuously monitored. The effects of the calorie restriction on the men were, for the most part, unsurprising. Their body fat melted off, making sitting on an hard wooden or metal chair uncomfortably painful. Many of the men brought cushions to sit on during lectures from the guest speakers, and they usually dozed during the talks unless the lecturer mentioned food, at which point the hungry students sat up and listened intently. The lack of body fat also meant the men were cold all the time. Their average body temperature dropped by nearly a degree, and their average heart rate dropped to a plodding 35 beats per minute. The men lost all interest in women, instead spending their nights paging through cookbooks. Mealtimes, which delivered carefully measured quantities of foods like potatoes, cabbage, and bread, became the entire focus of their lives. They began to lose interest in the war and the world outside the lab.



Study subjects reclining on the grass

after the crisis was over?

The psychological effects were perhaps the worst. Two men were dismissed from the experiment for cheating, one was dropped due to a medical problem, one for psychiatric issues, and one cut three of his own fingers off with an axe in a desperate attempt to be removed from the experiment without being seen as a quitter. As Keys' experiment was leaking test subjects, the doctor had another problem to contend with: the wars in Europe and in Japan were coming to an end, concentration camps full of starving prisoners were being liberated, and Allied military efforts were turning towards famine relief, but the end of his experiment was not yet in sight. What good would his seminal work in starvation relief be, if he couldn't publish it until long

Finally, for the last twelve weeks—Restricted Rehabilitation—the men were divided into four groups, each group having its calorie allowance increased by 400, 600, 800, or 1200 calories. Some were given vitamin or protein supplements, to measure the effects of different refeeding techniques. A number of the men stayed on for eight more weeks of "Unrestricted Rehabilitation," where they could eat as much as they wanted, but were still closely monitored and studied.

One of the key discoveries of the experiment was that vitamin and protein supplements had very little effect on patient outcome when rehabilitating starving victims. The most important factor in recovery speeds is simply the number of calories they are provided during refeeding. Keys also found that despite their weakness, starvation victims can continue to consume calories by mouth without feeding tubes or other equipment. Many starvation relief efforts spent significant time and money shipping supplements and feeding apparatus overseas, so this was an important result.

Keys' experiment ended in December 1945 with 32 subjects (including the man who cut off his own fingers, who begged to be allowed to finish the experiment). While it took several more years for Keys to analyze and publish the official results of his work, he encouraged his assistant,

psychologist Harold Guetzkow, to publish a 70-page illustrated booklet for relief workers in January 1946. *Men and Hunger: A Psychological Manual for Relief Workers* summarized the results of the experiment and provided practical instructions how to best rehabilitate a starving population. Finally, in 1950, Keys published the two-volume, 1,385-page *The Biology of Human Starvation*. It is particularly useful today in the treatment of eating disorders, because it details the mind-altering effects of starvation. These symptoms must be treated first in eating disorder patients, before the underlying psychological causes of the disorder can be identified and managed.





Subject Dan Miller, pictured left during the starvation phase, and right during the recovery phase

But the same global conflict that had motivated the Minnesota Starvation Experiment also resulted in the end of such extreme scientific experimentation on human test subjects. As Keys was writing up his results, the Doctors' Trial in Nuremburg was revealing the horrific experiments conducted by Nazi researchers on prisoners. The world's scientific community vowed that such atrocities could never be committed again, and developed the Nuremburg Code, and later the Helsinki Declaration, outlining the ethical limits of medical experimentation on humans. Despite the voluntary nature of the Minnesota Starvation Experiment, under these new standards, it became unlikely that such a study could ever be conducted again. Therefore, Dr. Keys' experiment can

never be replicated, and *The Biology of Human Starvation* will remain the seminal work on the subject of starvation.

9 COMMENTS calisonic Posted 01 December 2016 at 08:26 am

First.

jparenti

Posted 01 December 2016 at 09:15 am

Damn interesting — and somewhat horrifying.

KS Reader

Posted 01 December 2016 at 09:40 am

Thank you for writing this, Erika; it was very interesting. I wondered if any of the original men from the experiment were still living. I know they'd be in their 90s now, but I discovered that one of them, Marshall Sutton, was alive at least two years ago — 96 years old and living in Maryland. I found some other interesting quotes from him and other survivors in an article on the Twin Cities' "Pioneer Press" from Nov. 15, 2014 (http://www.twincities.com/2014/11/15/70-years-ago-the-minnesota-starvation-experiment-changed-lives/), which included the surprising (to me) detail of the enduring respect between the experimenter and the men who participated. They even had a reunion! Thank you again for bringing this landmark study to our attention.

matthew1701

Posted 01 December 2016 at 09:58 am

Damn chilling... for a good cause or not, that's not a test that I would want to be a part of in any way shape or form. Especially the starvation part, I love me some food!

Voracious Reader

Posted 02 December 2016 at 10:33 am

DI, as always! Leaves me hungering for the next article (as always!).

jeffco

Posted 03 December 2016 at 05:53 pm

Unfortunately the Nazi doctors' experiments on POWs and interned Jews also represent some of the only useful data on other subjects of scientific interest like effects of altitude and decompression on human subjects. And some of the studies conducted here on African American populations in the South in the name of Eugenics are equally appalling. I often wonder if there are still experiments being carried out on people now, who are completely oblivious. It surfaced some years ago that the military had done experiments in the south St Louis area in the 50's, in which non-descript boxes on utility poles were placed to emit radioactive cadmium (I think it was) so that they could clandestinely model the disbursement of radioactive fallout through urban areas. Years later those same areas showed alarmingly disproportionate ratios of Leukemia, birth defects, and certain cancers among people who lived there when young.

papashivo

Posted 05 December 2016 at 09:23 am

Dulcet tones Jake, keep being Damn Interesting, very excellent as always.

Ard Ri

Posted 07 December 2016 at 04:10 am

DAMN!

Dugan

Posted 09 December 2016 at 08:54 pm

Great article! I was of the mis-understanding that C rations (about 2,000 calories) were for civilians who had appropriate housing and that K rations were "Kombat" rations (about 3,000 calories) designed for soldiers living outdoors. In 1979 I had a conversation with a dietician who was with the Army when the concentration camps were liberated. She was still distressed by the number of people they killed by feeding them to fast. Feeding sent many into congestive heart failure. She also mentioned that once a person is severely malnourished no amount of nutrition will be effective in restoring health...hence the mortality of anorexia nervosa patients despite treatment.

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Stone Toilet Suggests Biblical Tale Is True

Sep 29, 2016 05:00 PM ET Seeker.com

The limestone toilet in the ancient city of Tel Lachish was installed in a symbolic act of desecration.

BY ROSSELLA LORENZI

A stone toilet unearthed at a 2,800-year-old shrine in Israel has provided compelling evidence for the Biblical tale of King Hezekiah, according to archaeologists at the Israeli Antiquities Authority.

One of the most prominent kings of Judah, Hezekiah is known for the religious reforms he carried out in the Eighth century B.C., when he centralized all worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem, banishing cult sites of other deities.

According to the account in the book of Kings, King Hezekiah "removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles."

The limestone toilet, fashioned in the shape of a chair with a hole in its center, was found inside one of the six chambers of the monumental gate in the ancient city of Tel Lachish, some 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

The gate served as a shrine and the toilet was installed there in a symbolic act of desecration.

The practice of destroying cult locations by installing a toilet in them is documented in the Bible, particularly in the case of King Jehu's fight against worshippers of the pagan god Baal.

"And they demolished the pillar of Ba'al, and demolished the house of Ba'al, and made it a latrine to this day," the Book of Kings reads.

According to the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA), this is the first time archaeological evidence has been found for the practice of desecrating a site in this way.

The gate-shrine in Tel Lachish National Park was uncovered decades ago, but the current excavation has now completely exposed the massive structure.

Preserved at a height of 13 feet, the portal featured six chambers, three on either side of the main street that passed between them.

Benches with armrests were found in the first chamber.

"According to the biblical narrative, the cities' gates were the place where 'everything took place': the city elders, judges, governors, kings and officials -- everyone would sit on these benches," Sa'ar Ganor, the IAA's excavation director, said.

His team also uncovered jars, scoops for loading grain, terracotta lamps and stamped pot handles.

The seal impressions bear Hezekiah's royal mark and the name of a senior official during Hezekiah's reign, evidence of the military and administrative preparations of the Kingdom of Judah in the war against Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

Ganor also unearthed a large room housing a bench upon which offerings were placed.

"An opening was exposed in the corner of the room that led to the holy of holies; to our great excitement, we found two four-horned altars," Ganor said.

Although it is not known which deities were venerated at the gate-shrine, it is clear that the cult was eradicated as the altar horns were intentionally smashed. To make the point clear, a stone toilet was installed.

Laboratory tests revealed the toilet was never used, prompting the archaeologists to conclude that its placement had been symbolic.

The gate was destroyed by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in 701 BC. The excavation revealed arrow heads and sling stones, suggesting that hand-to-hand combat occurred there.



www.HIP.Institute / Philippe Bourseiller

Egypt will likely offer promising finds in 2016. King Tutankhamun's tomb will be under the spotlight as a recent investigation suggests the western and northern walls of the 3,300-year-old burial may hide two secret chambers. According to Egypt's Minister of Antiquity Mamdouh al-Damaty there is a 90 percent chance the tomb of King Tut contains such chambers.

Damaty made the announcement last November at the end of a radar-based investigation. The non-invasive search followed a claim by Nicholas Reeves, a

British Egyptologist at the University of Arizona, who first speculated the existence of the chambers, arguing that one contains the remains, and possibly the intact grave goods, from queen Nefertiti.

She was the wife of the "heretic" monotheistic pharaoh Akhenaten, Tutankhamun's father. Will archaeologists try to access the hidden chambers? Their attempt may lead to what Damaty called "one of the most important finds of the century."



www.HIP.Institute / Philippe Bourseiller

The noninvasive technologies applied to King Tut's tomb will be widely used this year in another ambitious project. Called Scan Pyramid, the investigation is carried out by a team from Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering and the Paris-based organization Heritage, Innovation and Preservation under the authority of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities. The project aims to scan the largest pyramids of Egypt in order to detect the presence of any unknown internal structures and cavities.

The technique could lead to a better were built. The project uses a mix of

understanding of the pyramids' structure and how they were built. The project uses a mix of technologies such as infrared thermography, muon radiography, and 3D reconstruction to look at the

inside of four pyramids, which are more than 4,500 years old. They include Khufu, or Cheops, Khafre or Chephren at Giza, the Bent pyramid and the Red pyramid at Dahshur. One



University College London

Last year a study made an extraordinary and controversial claim: Stonehenge was basically a second-hand monument from Wales. It would have stood there hundreds of years before it was dismantled and transported to Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. The research indicates that two quarries in the Preseli Hills of Pembrokeshire, in southwest Wales, are the source of Stonehenge's bluestones.

Carbon dating revealed such stones were dug out at least 500 years before Stonehenge was built -- suggesting they

were first used in a local monument that was later dismantled and dragged off to England.

"Stonehenge was a Welsh monument from its very beginning. If we can find the original monument in Wales from which it was built, we will finally be able to solve the mystery," Mike Parker Pearson, director of the project and professor of British later prehistory at University College London said. Researchers have been using geophysical surveys, trial excavations and aerial photographic analysis to identify the ruins of a lost, dismantled monument. The results of such research promise to make the headlines this year.

"We think we have the most likely spot. We may find something big in 2016," Kate Welham, of Bournemouth University, said.



Colombian Culture Ministry

In early December, the Colombian government announced they had found the holy grail of treasure shipwrecks -- an 18th-century Spanish galleon that went down off the country's coast with a treasure of gold, coins and precious stones now valued between \$4 billion and \$17 billion. The multibillion-dollar ship, called the San Jose, was found off the island of Baru, near Cartagena. The vessel was part of Spain's only royal convoy to bring colonial coins and bullion home to King Philip V during the War of Spanish Succession from 1701 to 1714.

The San Jose was trying to outrun a fleet of British warships off the island of Baru on June 8, 1708, when an explosion sent it to the bottom of the Caribbean Sea. She was reportedly carrying 600 people, chests of emeralds and tons of silver, gold and platinum.

The shipwreck has been at a center of a decades-long search that also involved a legal battle with the Seattle-based Sea Search Armada, or SSA, a commercial salvage company that claims it first discovered the wreck's location in 1981. Moreover, Peru has argued that any treasure recovered

from the San Jose should be considered a Peruvian national patrimony. As more legal fights will likely occur, new expeditions to the wreck in 2016 are expected to recover the much disputed treasure of gold and emeralds.



Paolo Nannini

One of the most promising discoveries last year was an oval-shaped structure unearthed in the Tuscan town of Volterra.

Archaeologists believe it represents the most important Roman amphitheater finding over the last century. The foundations of the colosseum, which is oval-shaped like the much larger arena in the heart of Rome, might date back to the 1st century A.D.

Amphitheaters like these were used during Roman times to feature events including gladiator combats and wild animal fights. The archaeologists estimate the structure, which

mostly lies at a depth of 20 to 32 feet, measured some 262 by 196 feet. Only a small part of it has been unearthed during a small dig survey. New finds are expected this year as a full-scale dig is launched.

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Sympathetic Empiricism and the Palatine Lights

07 Wednesday Dec 2016



Don't worry, be happy. It is only folklore.

How many times, while mucking about in the swamps of strange phenomena, have you heard the dismissive phrase, "its only folklore"? Whenever I hear that, my vestigial nurturing instinct (I had it surgically removed in the '90s), kicks in and I want to ask the speaker if they find the world to be a big, scary place or if their mother loved them. For example, would you say that "all men are created equal" is fact or fiction? Rationally and empirically we can demonstrate that this it is a blatant untruth, yet in the context of civilized existence and ostensible democracy, we must behave as if it is so. We are not indulging in a lie and casting reason aside, so much as we are collectively agreeing to frame our relations to the external world within a narrative. It is a rational and aspirational act to strive for an ideal and to make hard truths palatable, to box in our essential

amorality, narcissism, and selfishness, and thereby prevent society from quickly descending into Hobbe's "war of all against all".

Those of a more skeptical mindset tend to view folklore purely as fantastic stories, superstitious holdovers from a darker past, pointing out the discrepancies in versions of each tale, the blurring of facts, the changing of names, the fluidity of the locations, the repetition of themes, the correspondence of symbols, and the implausibility of the monsters and specters that are held to co-inhabit our world, neglecting the fact that folklore is about how we tell ourselves uncomfortable realities that flatly refuse to fit in the sunlit world of the sane and rational, the crazy dictates of our conscience that balk at clawing our way to the top of the great chain of being, or the subtle, acausal, but nonetheless suspicious consequences of our practical actions. Buried in our folklore is our innate human nastiness, exposed for us to see in a form which can communicate an ideal. And it pisses us off, or as Oscar Wilde observed, "Man is a rational animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason".

Were Hansel and Gretel historically authenticated personages? Unlikely. But did medieval German children sometimes wander off into the forest and vanish under suspicious circumstances? Most probably. Did they do so with enough regularity that we thought perhaps the kids should have a template for dealing with such a harsh reality, the predators and pitfalls of life lived a little closer to the wild? When we push our folklore far enough back into the past it provides a comfort zone from which we can digest its underlying ugliness. Time is the spice that makes folklore more palatable. When we can analyze historical documents and determine that the events described in our fairy tales, folklore, and mythology, conspiracy and fringe theories, cannot be substantiated with "acceptable" historical or scientific evidence, we can breathe a sigh of relief, and often ignore the more disturbing meaning lurking beneath the surface – a meaning that is not purely fictional, nor purely factual, rather instructive and sometimes illuminating, shining a light on those dark recesses of human existence that we prefer to overlook.

The inanity of arguing that "there is no truth" is abundantly apparent. Truths abound, but there are also "hard" truths, particularly the ones that we dare not admit to ourselves and act upon except in

the realm of our imaginations or common tales that capture the warp and weave of our consciousness. When we don't want to admit the ugliness of our history, our heritage, or the razors edge that we walk between sanity and insanity, when the prospect of disorder and chaos appear to be the organizing principles of the universe, we take these expressions of fear, this folklore, and provide a superficial analysis that says such and such thing never existed, such a dismal event never occurred, people never behaved so badly, and we point our fingers at historical documentation that proves its absence, all the while deafening ourselves to the veracity regarding the human condition that swims beneath the surface, and sometimes inelegantly flops out on the beach to breathe in a gulp of air and consider an alternative.

We can find a fascinating case study in this dynamic when we examine the origins of the famed "Palatine Lights" off Block Island, Rhode Island, immortalized in John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "The Palatine". In the 18th and 19th Century, a flaming phantom ship was oft reported cruising off Sandy Point, usually around Yuletide, the spectral remnants of an ill-fated vessel beset by nature's wrath, mutiny, and atrocity that wrecked on the island on Dec. 27, 1738 (or perhaps 1752). And what once was history, through the inexorable process of our understandings of ourselves, has with time and temperance become folklore, and as folklore, then becomes fiction, as literalists and the eminently rational (who wish to enact a different and simpler world) find ample targets for denial and dissection, stripping the bark from the occasional tree that has sagged into the path while ignoring the hungry eyes in the forest around them. In the numerous extant versions of the back story, the dates change, the names change, and the plot bends, but each one confronts a fear of what man finds himself capable of both doing and enduring. Let's start with the most common variation.

It was in 1752 that a ship named Palatine started from Holland for Philadelphia. She was crowded with immigrants. It was in the winter and the North Atlantic was in one of her most savage tempers. Gales drove the Palatine far to the north of her true course. Mutiny broke out among the crew. The rebellious seamen murdered their captain and took charge of the ship. With the water and food in their control they sold these necessaries of life to the terrified and helpless immigrants. They demanded \$10 for a biscuit and \$5 for a single cup of water. And when the unhappy passengers had spent all their money they were left to starve to death and the dead were thrown overboard. Eventually the mutineers, with all of the money and the valuables of the dead and of the survivors in their hands, took to the boats and abandoned the Palatine to the fury of the storms. It was in Christmas week that the ship went ashore on the northern tip of Block Island. The Block Island wreckers swarmed aboard the stranded vessel, bent on robbing it. But they were kind to the miserable, half-starved immigrants. They took them off the ship and into their homes. But there was one of the immigrants who had been driven quite mad by the horrors of their experience. She refused to leave the ship and fought like a wild thing in her shrieking madness. Leaving her aboard, the wreckers towed the ship toward a sheltered cove where they hoped to strip her at their leisure. But another gale sprang up, and rather than run the risk of their prize being torn away from them by the storm and perhaps falling into other hands, the Block Islanders set her afire. Wrapped in a mantle of flame, the Palatine drifted out to sea. The wreckers and immigrants, standing on the shore, watched the burning ship drifting away from them, while back across the water came the unearthly screams of the mad woman left aboard to burn to death. And so, as the years passed, the tradition arose and settled into fixed belief that the Palatine, like the Flying Dutchman, was doomed to sail the sea forever. Hundreds have claimed to have seen the apparition, and the "Palatine Light" is a well known phenomenon along the New England coast. There is, apparently, some kind of light—strange, mysterious, inexplicable—which is seen far out at sea at certain times. One resident of Block Island

asserts that the light from the blazing ghost ship is strong enough to illuminate his room at night. The poet Whittier heard the tale and put it into a poem, "The Palatine" ... "Still on many a moonless night from Kingston Head and from Montauk Light, the spectre kindles and burns in sight." . . . And there are people living this day on Block Island who will tell you, with their hand on the Book, that they have gazed seaward in the blackness of the night, startled by a bright radiance at sea, and have watched, with straining eyes, while the Palatine, blazing from truck to keelson, swept along the horizon while the screams of the mad woman came down the wind to chill the marrow in their bones (Conger, 1934, p216-218).

Could this be so? Were the Palatine lights a variation on the overused *ignus fatuus* (although I'm pretty sure there wasn't a lot of swamp gas out on the ocean) held to deceive so many into spinning tales of specters and mercurial monsters or the misapprehension of natural phenomena by the reputed common folk? The sober scholar and avowed skeptic asks, how could they be anything else? Sobriety is for stuffed shirts who don't revel in their own subject, beyond the accolades they are accorded when they demonstrate their mastery within the narrow confines of accepted truth. I say drink and speculate, let your mind wander over forbidden possibilities. How quick are we to slice and dice the narrative into "facts" that can be dismissed, rather than listening to what is being communicated. Phantom ships don't exist and here's why, they tell you. There never was a ship *Palatine*, or at least not one that wrecked on Block Island. In 1870, inquiries of curious historians were made to Charles Mueller, U.S. Consul at Amsterdam (imagined to be the home port of the Palatine) who dutifully reported, "the Custom House Archives there have been searched, and that the record was found of a ship *Palatine* which was wrecked in the Bay of Bengal, July 14, 1784" (Livermore, 1882, p99).

Furthermore, naming a ship "The Palatine" which reputedly was carrying a load of immigrants from the German Middle Rhine palatinate of the Holy Roman Empire would essentially be the same as calling any ship loaded with Irish immigrants "The Ireland" for shorthand, the actual existence of a ship with this moniker sinking off India notwithstanding. "Aha! Let loose the dogs of rationality," cries the skeptic. There was no such thing, and following this train of logic, decrying the fabulous nature of the tale, as its central protagonist has been shown not to exist, or certainly to never have been where it ought to have been. Except that a ship filled with "Palatine" immigrants did indeed wreck off Block Island. What we do have is the good ship *Princess Augusta*, and she throws a wrench in the works. It was the custom in Colonial Rhode Island, that any accident or misadventure at sea was reported to the first notary public the vessel's officers could reach, to be included in official records. Rhode Island's 1738 *Notarial Protests* include a curious description.

The Ship Princess Augusta, Captain Andrew Brook, on her voyage from Rotterdam to Philadelphia with a cargo of Palatine prisoners and their baggage, was ill used by the sea, weakened by the death of half her hands, was blown out of her course and forced ashore in a December snow storm on Block Island, where the usual protests were made by master and men before the Warden. It is possible that these represent only one side of the story (Preston, 1932, p32).

As it turns out, a bunch of folks from "the Palatine" were being immigrated to the Americas with extreme prejudice in 1738 aboard the ill-fated *Princess Augusta*, and subsequently found themselves wrecked on the shores of Block Island. The circumstances of this misfortune were a bit vague, but obviously merited some sort of documented protest. Sailing in the 18th Century was a fairly dicey affair, complicated by almost continuous naval warfare between one world power or another, the Golden Age of Piracy, and a nefarious colonial version of modern marine salvage called

"wrecking", which involved deliberately decoying a ship with false lights from shore so that it catastrophically grounds and can then be plundered, a reasonably profitable venture for marginal coastal communities. There are some hints that this may have been an occasional source of income for the colonial residents of Block Island, and it has been suggested that the *Palatine* (or *Princess Augusta*) met with this sordid fate.

As a rule the salvage from vessels that came from overseas with passengers (called "henboats" to distinguish them from freighters) was highly profitable because immigrants usually brought along all their worldly wealth. Therefore, when one winter's day in the late 1700's a large and evidently disabled vessel with many people aboard was driven by a storm on the reefs along the Block Island coast, the wreckers were ready to swarm aboard the hapless craft as soon as it was settled good and solid. When they climbed up the sides and landed on deck they met a sight they never bargained for. Instead of finding well-fed passengers they were confronted by a bunch of human scarecrows—thin, ragged, pitiful creatures that touched the heart of even the most savage wrecker. Men and women, some sixteen of them, were taken ashore and cared for. One woman who had gone mad with fear vanished in the hull of the ship. Every soul aboard was a passenger. What had happened to officers and crew? . . . This was the story the wreckers were told: The ship was the Palatine which had left Amsterdam, Holland, with a group of Dutch families who planned to establish a new Dutch community in Pennsylvania. Bad weather, poor planning, and brutal officers drove the crew to mutiny. Once the sailors had control, they killed the officers, robbed the passengers of all they had, took to the boats, and left the Palatine adrift. When the ship stranded on the coast of Block Island, the victims of the mutiny had been drifting on the cold Atlantic for many weeks. Children and old folks had died of starvation and exposure (Adamson, 1955, p116-117).

Now there are some who believe the story about the pity of the wreckers who found the disabled hulk and nearly crewless ship driven onto shore by a terrible storm was a convenient rewrite of history meant to assuage guilt, suggesting "The Palatine was a Dutch trader which, lured by false lights exhibited by wreckers, went ashore on Block Island in the year 1752. Having stripped her, the wreckers, in order to conceal all traces of their crime, fired her" (Bridges, 1908, p66), and much to their dismay, "As the tide lifted her and carried her flaming out to sea, agonizing shrieks came from the blaze, and the figure of a woman who had hidden herself in the hold in fear of the wreckers stood out black amidst the roaring blaze. Then the deck fell in and ship and woman vanished" (Pears, 1911, p934).

The American poet John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) in his famous poem about the incident seemed to lean towards the darker version, waxing poetically, as poets are wont to do, "like birds of prey/Tearing the heart of the ship away/And the dead never had a word to say/And then, with a ghastly shimmer and shine/Over the rocks and the seething brine/They burned the wreck of the Palatine." Of course, by the 19th Century, Block Island had gotten a whole lot more civilized and didn't appreciate Whittier impugning the character of their not-so-distant ancestors.

In Samuel Truesdale Livermore's 1881 history of Block Island, he takes a stab at validating some of the details of the story of the *Palatine*, and despite the fact that she was likely probably named *Princess Augusta*, unearths some curiously authentic facts in interviews with descendants of the Block Island colonists who would have been involved, gathering odd bits of memory preserved and told to them by their grandparents. A Raymond Dickens mentioned that his grandfather frequently spoke of the ship Palatine, and how its invalid passengers were kindly received in Block Island

homes. Also, a well-known personage in Colonial Block Island was a lady known as "Dutch Kattern", a *Palatine* survivor who married a freed slave, had children, and was believed to be a witch. "She was a noted fortune-teller; that she would hide away behind a wall, or in a thicket of bushes, and there lie in a trance for hours. On returning to the house much exhausted, and being asked where she had been, her reply was that she had been home to Holland, and then would give an account of her kindred there as she had just seen them" (Livermore, 1882, p101). But rumblings of a darker story never seem to be far below, as the gruesome fate of the Palatine and it's unfortunate last passenger have been retained in the tales explaining the mysterious Palatine lights, which numerous prominent and respected Block Islanders attested to in the 18th and 19th Centuries. On the first anniversary of the wreck of the ship, the Palatine lights were first sighted.

A twelvemonth later, on the same evening of the year, the islanders were startled at the sight of a ship in the offing with flames lapping up her sides and rigging, and smoke clouds rolling off before the wind. It burned to the water's edge in sight of hundreds. In the winter following it came again, and was seen, in fact, for years thereafter at regular intervals, by those who would gladly have forgotten the sight of it (one of the community, an Indian, fell into madness whenever he saw the light), while those who listened caught the sound of a woman's voice raised in agony above the roar of fire and water (Skinner, 1896, p48-50).

The complex tale combined with the appearance of strange lights off Block Island leave us with folklore that in many of its essentials is both patently falsifiable as well as verifiably made in reference to actual events that, masking a disturbing truth that our ancestors were often irredeemable bastards, just as we are, and forever shall be. The story, simplified, retains the horror encapsulated therein, but distances us from it.

The specter of the Palatine is occasionally seen on the Sound, and is the forerunner of a gale of wind. She was a Dutch trading vessel, and was wrecked on Block Island in 1752. The wreckers, it is said, made short work of her, stripping her fore and aft and setting fire to the hull. As she drifted blazing off the coast, a human form was visible amid the flames, the form of a female passenger, left to perish on the doomed craft. Since, and generally upon the anniversary of the wreck, a phantom ship with blazing hull, charred spars, and scorched sails and rigging has been seen cruising of Block Island.

Perhaps we need to temper our demands for empirical verification with lessons from sympathetic magic, which is rather dismissively defined as a "primitive or magical ritual using objects or actions resembling or symbolically associated with the event or person over which influence is sought", and consider the value of a "sympathetic empiricism", that suggests while our knowledge is derived from sense experience, our sense experience often escapes the grasp of our conscious morality and encounters the ingratitude of our rationality, and thus we encode our heart of darkness symbolically in folklore. Our folklore plumbs the depths of our capacity for good and evil, and then reports it back to us by the light of the campfire. As J. Michael Straczynski said, "The point of mythology or myth is to point to the horizon and to point back to ourselves: This is who we are; this is where we came from; and this is where we're going".

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thoughts on "Sympathetic Empiricism and the Palatine Lights"

1. busterggi said:

December 9, 2016 at 1:28 pm

G'wan, it was a glowing omen of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

2. floodmouse said:

December 10, 2016 at 10:58 am

These stories are neither fiction or fact; they are a kind of ritual repeated over and over, with infinite variations, but always returning to the same things. I think folktales have been replaced by Netflix and made-for-cable movies. How many "ghost ship" movies have you seen? And you're right, these types of stories are always about what human beings are capable of, and we tell them over and over, trying to obtain some kind of catharsis.

Blog at WordPress.com.

Taxpayers spent £500,000 to find out if prayer could cure AIDS

metro.co.uk

Rob Waugh for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 4:05 pm

Can prayer actually cure AIDS? Of course it can't. You and I know it can't. Any sane person knows it can't.

But somehow the U.S. government spent £500,000 to find out, empirically, that prayer definitely cannot cure AIDS.

It's just one of many wacky alternative-medicine research projects funded by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine – a government organisation paid for by taxpayers.

And there we were thinking that homeopathy on the NHS was bad.

Other research projects from the NCAM found that squirting coffee up someone's bottom cannot cure cancer (funny that), and that massaging people with cancer makes them feel slightly better.

The NCCAM was launched more than a decade ago – to investigate treatments people use, but which are not accepted by 'normal' medicine.

In its years of existence, it has spent \$1.4B – more than a billion pounds – and many scientists are not too happy about this, the Chicago Tribune reports.

"Some of these treatments were just distinctly made up out of people's imaginations,' said Dr. Wallace Sampson of Stanford University.

'We don't take public money and invest it in projects that are just made up out of people's imaginations.

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The bizarre reason John Diefenbaker is entombed in concrete: He was afraid enemies would steal his corpse

| December 11, 2016 2:40 PM ET

nationalpost.com

There's only one definite way to figure out if John Diefenbaker really did father illegitimate children; dig him up, extract a DNA sample and perform a paternity test.

It's unlikely that any judge would allow the exhumation of an official National Historic Person. But there's another, more technical, barrier at play: John Diefenbaker cannot be exhumed.

After the 13th Prime Minister was consigned to the earth on August 22, 1979, the coffins of he and his wife Olive were then covered over with a healthy layer of wet cement — at least according to one account of his life and well-cheorographed funeral.

In the 1995 book Trumpets and Drums, Diefenbaker associate Dick Spencer wrote that "the final service rendered Dief by Saskatoon funeral attendants was the pouring of wet cement into his grave, around and onto the casket below."

Spencer's description remains one of the only surviving accounts of the unusual measure.

The reason, according to the book, was that Diefenbaker was worried about having his body stolen. Specifically, he had been spooked by an 1876 criminal plot to steal Abraham Lincoln's body that was foiled at the last minute by an undercover Secret Service agent.

After that, Honest Abe was interred in a steel cage encased by concrete.

"What many weren't aware of was the Chief's fascination with Abraham Lincoln's rites," wrote Spencer.

"Lincoln had been so protected in his final resting place. Dief requested, and was given, the same precaution."



Wikimedia Commons

Diefenbaker appears to be the only Canadian Prime Minister who arranged this kind of burial treatment. Most of Canada's first ministers, in fact, are buried in family plots or out-of-the-way municipal cemeteries.

And despite the 1876 Lincoln fiasco, being buried under concrete is even rare among U.S. presidents.

Digging up anyone from George Washington to John F. Kennedy is as easy as prying up a marble lid or taking a spade to six feet of earth. James Garfield's casket wasn't even buried; it's still visible in a Cleveland crypt.

In fact, Diefenbaker is actually part of a relatively elite group of people with ultra-secure graves. The film pioneer Charles Chaplin, notably, is now in a secure grave after his corpse was stolen for ransom in 1978.

Concrete graves also enshroud some of history's most notorious criminals, including gangster John Dillinger and the 19th century serial killer H.H. Holmes.

The brutal Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin originally had his body preserved like that of Vladimir Lenin, but as his crimes became more widely known after his death, the dictator was shifted to a nondescript concrete-lined grave outside the Kremlin.

More curious still about Diefenbaker is that nobody seems to remember that he demanded such bizarre burial arrangements.



University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections
John Diefenbaker at an Edmonton book signing shortly
before his death.

The grave is located outside the Diefenbaker Canada Centre on the grounds of the University of Saskatchewan. But neither the Diefenbaker Centre nor the University of Saskatchewan Archives could provide any evidence of a concrete burial.

"Unfortunately we are unable to locate any mention of Diefenbaker's wishes regarding being buried in cement, or any notes at all on the subject, within Diefenbaker's own papers or within university records," wrote a University of Saskatchewan researcher to the National Post.

The unusual burial does not appear to have been mentioned in press coverage of the initial funeral, and also rarely makes it into Diefenbaker

biographies.

Aside from the Spencer account, in fact, the only written account the National Post could find was by an anonymous student groundskeeper quoted in the book Inside These Greystone Walls, a history of the University of Saskatchewan.

"I think the hole itself was steel lined or cement lined rather. And then they poured a big cement pad over the casket," the student told author Michael Taft.

However, the bizarre request would be in keeping with the over-the-top pageantry that Diefenbaker insisted on for his burial.

Every detail had been intricately planned ahead of time by Diefenbaker, and it remains the most elaborate — and most expensive — funeral for a prime minister in Canadian history.

It included a state funeral, a singing of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, the disinterment of his late wife Olive and a highly publicized funeral train from Ottawa to Saskatoon. In the months before his death, Diefenbaker had spent countless hours refining his list of honorary pallbearers.

"He (Diefenbaker) had studied every detail of Winston Churchill's state funeral, down to the simple inscription on Churchill's gravestone," wrote Spencer in Trumpets and Drums,

Spencer noted that he had tried in vain to curb Diefenbaker's obsession on the "macabre" subject and that "the plans had been talked about, practically rehearsed, with us during the last two years."



University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections John Diefenbaker watches the 1979 party leaders' debate.

As for any suspicions that Diefenbaker ordered the concrete treatment specifically to avoid any future paternity tests, the timeline is off.

Diefenbaker was buried in 1979, a full nine years before the applications of forensic DNA testing were widely known.

Email: thopper@nationalpost.com | Twitter:

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The Black Eyed Boy Wal Mart Experience - My Haunted Life Too

myhauntedlifetoo.com

08 December 2016 | Black Eyed Kids, Your Stories

They say you can get anything at Wal-Mart.....

Note this story took place in the 1970's – long before the current wave of stories got going.

I was around twelve when this incident took place. I didn't know anything about Black Eyed kids until a few years ago when I started reading reports on the internet about these strange incidents. My story is a little different to those other accounts.

I was sitting in my Moms car waiting for my mom to return. She was inside Walmart and I had elected to wait in the car with my book. A young boy had walked past the car a few times—and I hadn't really taken that much notice of him. The fourth or fifth time the boy went past I think he noticed me as he came over to the car and stared in at me. I tried to ignore him and read my book—but he started whispering.

"Let me in."

I knew the front doors were locked and checked the doors at the back. My side was unlocked but the side the boy was on was locked. I locked my side. The boy kept pleading to be left in. The boy then went quiet and stared at me for a few minutes before walking away.

I want to talk about the eyes. This boy had completely black eyes. There was no other color to be seen. Just pure blackness. He didn't blink, he didn't wince or show emotion. His face was stony white. When he spoke I seemed to hear the words in my head more than through my ears. When he tapped on the window it was slow and methodical. He did not seem to be in any danger, or need my help. He was not panicking. It was almost like he was a robot under the control of someone, or something, else.

The weirdest thing about this encounter was that my mother returned to the car a few minutes later and complained that some woman had approached her and had asked for the keys to her car. She said my mother had blocked her in and this woman want wanted to move her car. My mom knew she hadn't. This strange woman became quite insistent and my mother had been forced to ask a security guard to help her. To my knowledge our incidents had taken place at exactly the same time. She also told me that the woman's eyes were strange... Not completely black but almost.

So were these two incidents related? I think so. But how did two seemingly unconnected people manage to communicate so effectively over such a distance? Keep in mind that this happened in the 1970's before the micro-technology of today. Were they under the control of another person, or were they able to communicate telepathically? What is going on?

Submitted by Yanni Imbrugen

PS. If you liked this story then The Black Eyed Kids will scare you rigid...

PPS. True Tales of Haunted Places – out December 10th!

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The Ghostly Girl Who wanted To Play - My Haunted Life Too

myhauntedlifetoo.com

07 December 2016 | Haunted houses, Your Stories, Your True Encounters

This story took place in London, Ontario about twenty years ago. I was staying with my parents at a close family friends' house. Our vacation was going well until one night I was woken up by something tapping on my shoulder. Fast taps in rhythm. I tend to be a deep sleeper, but these taps woke me straight up. I turned over and switched on the light. Nothing was there. I turned the light off and lay on my back. About a minute later the taps started again. But faster than before. I turned the light on again and could see nothing. I was getting scared by this point and didn't want to turn the light off. Eventually I settled down and turned it off and the tapping started again. I was hysterical at this point. But turned the light on and kept my hand on the cable that switched it on and off. As soon as I switched it off the light the tapping started again. In the end, I slept with the light on for the rest of our stay.

The following year we stayed there again. I'd almost forgotten about my experience and was settling down to sleep one night when I heard giggling from the wardrobe. I got out of bed, went over the wardrobe and opened the door. Nothing was there. I went back to bed, switched the light on and the tapping started again—followed by the giggling. This went on throughout the first night of our stay. I was getting very little sleep and felt awful. The second night I kept the light on and went to sleep—but woke up later that night to the tapping. The light had been switched off. I flipped the switch and the light wouldn't switch on. I called for my parents who came, turned the light on, and told me to stop making a fuss—I was having a bad dream.

The third night I walked into the room in which I was sleeping and saw the shape of a person under the covers. I could make the shape of the body out lying under the covers. I stood with my mouth open as the shape "deflated" and left the bed empty. I slept with my parents that night. They couldn't understand why I was so afraid.

The following day I went into my room to pick up a bed and saw a small girl sitting in a chair by the window. When I tried to say something, she turned and faded away. I started to wonder who this girl was. She was obviously trying to contact me. After I saw her, I wasn't as scared as I had been—but things kept happening. I heard crying in the night, footsteps, giggles, and the tapping kept taking place sporadically.

To this very day I still wonder who that girl was—and what she wanted to tell me.

Has anyone else had an experience like this?

Submitted by Jan Siegler

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The Headless Hitchhiker of St. Leonard's Forest

esoterx.com

13SundayNov 2016

"We live in a cult of the upgrade right now. There's always something around the corner that will make whatever you think is cool right now feel obsolete" – Colin Trevorrow

Being a ghost sucks. It's cold. It's damp. You have to wear the same outfit for eternity. Paranormal investigators keep asking you stupid questions without bothering to do any research first. Oh, and lets no forget those freaking exorcists acting all righteous. They're almost as bad as the sage-waving cleansers. I mean I've got my haunt on here and you just made it smell like a Yankee Candle. Clearly there are a multitude of indignities in the phantom afterlife, but it can always get worse, particularly if you are the sort of specter that is made obsolete by technological advances. This is precisely what seems to have happened to the headless hitchhiker of St. Leonard's Forest in West Sussex, England. The advent of the horseless carriage slowed his roll.

St. Leonard's Forest is the western end of the greater Weald (from the Old English for "Forest") that cuts across the counties of Sussex, Hampshire, Kent and Surrey, a broad stretch of woodlands that were largely covered with impenetrable vegetation for much of history, but crossed by a few trails since at least the Mesolithic. The forest was named for the Frankish nobleman and hermit St. Leonard (485-559 A.D), who in his old age became a forest hermit. We'll politely ignore the fact that his actual hermitage was probably near Limoges, France, although it seems that Benedictine monks did indeed establish a hermitage dedicated to him in St. Leonard's Forest. We make some allowances because St. Leonard is traditionally credited with slaying the last dragon in England in the very forest that bears his name.

We're fairly sure that St. Leonard missed a few dragons as the Anglo-Saxon historian Æthelweard (died 998 A.D.) and author of the *Chronicon Æthelweardi* noted that in 773 A.D., "monstrous serpents were seen in the country of the Southern Angles, which is called Sussex" (Giles, 1896, p18) and again in 1614, a pamphlet was circulated entitled, "A True and Wonderful Discourse Relating a Strange and Monstrous Serpent or Dragon, Lately Discovered and Yet Living to the Great Annoyance and Diverse Slaughters of both Men and Cattle by His Strong and Violent Poison, In Sussex, Two Miles from Horsam, in a Wood Called St. Leonards Forrest, and Thirty Miles from London, this present Month of August, 1614" (Hindley, 1871, p79). Dragons. You try scrubbing. You try soaking. Still, you've got dragons. We're a lot less worried about them ever since gunpowder became a thing. Simply note that nefarious goings on are par for the course in St. Leonard's Forest.

By the 18th Century, the most lucrative output of St. Leonard's Forest was rabbits, and at the close of the 18th Century, pamphleteer William Cobbett described the bleak and barren road from Pease Pottage to Horsham as "six of the worst miles in England". This is not something they report on *Trip Advisor*, but it does indicate that St. Leonard's Forest has been considered a rather unpleasant place for several centuries. As if its apparent dragon-infested reputation was not enough, the primary problem seems to be the presence of headless horseman, or rather hitchhiker, who hops on the horse of foolish travelers and rides in tandem to the edge of the forest. "If a man rides through the charmed precincts at night, a headless figure is apt to vault up behind him and accompany him to the limit of the forest! This figure is Squire Paulett" (Hare, 1896, p152), yet "there is apparently no record to inform us what evil the squire had done or suffered when alive to earn so gruesome a destiny" (Brabant, 1909, p294). Of course, the 18th Century was a little more blasé about the prospect of a headless squire hitching a ride than we are today, because frankly when you've already got dragons to contend with, what's one more preternatural inconvenience?

The wild wooded waste known as St. Leonard's Forest, which, according to tradition, used to be haunted by a dreadful dragon or serpent, as well as a headless horseman; they were the terror of all travellers in those parts, and as late even ast the seventeenth century people could be found to attest on oath that they had seen them! Likewise, there is a local tradition, still stoutly maintained, that within the forest adders never sting, nor nightingales sing (Hissey, 1896, p173).

Now, some effort has been made to determine who this "Squire Paulett" might actually be because there is simply nothing folklorists hate more than a ghost without a good backstory.

The spectre of St. Leonard's Forest has nearly faded from popular memory. In the days of our grandfathers, woe to the unhappy horseman who should, at night, enter the charmed precincts of that ancient wood; for a headless figure of a man, disregarding alike both menaces and prayers, would vault behind him upon the crupper, and thus accompany him (in a manner reminding one of Horace's "Post equitem sedet atra cura") to the opposite verge of the forest. This spectre was known as "Squire Paulett"; but of his history, and how and wherefore he lost his head, nothing seems to be known; unless, indeed, he was identical with William Powlett, Esq., a captain of the Horse-Grenadiers, in the reign of King George I. This gentleman certainly lived at St. Leonard's Forest, and he lies buried in West Grinstead church under a monument by Rysbrach, which is reported to have cost £2,000. The period of Captain Powlett's death, 1746, independently of the fact of that personage having died with his head on, is very much against the idea of his having become a ghost of the medieval type (Lower, 1861, p222-223).

If you're going to get your headless horseman oeuvre on, you're faced with a problem when travel by horse goes out of fashion. That signature move of hopping behind the unwary rider and terrorizing them all the way to the limits of the forest definitely has flair, but sadly requires a horse. This may very well explain why the headless horseman of St. Leonard's Forest has faded from memory. For one, "his presence is an additional reason why one should explore the forest on foot" (Lucas, 1904, p129) should you be feeling a hankering for a stroll in the woods. And secondarily, there aren't too many folks trotting on horseback through the Weald anymore. Consequently, "motorists and cyclists do not seem to have been troubled. Possibly they have a turn of speed quite beyond the powers of such an old-fashioned spook" (Harper, 1922, p198). A ghost jumping behind you on your horse, encircling your waist with his arms, and hanging on until you exit his woodland precincts is terrifying, but you might not even notice in a modern conveyance.

It may be that he does this still with belated light cars in the forest by-roads, but no evidence of this is forthcoming. Except that conversation between the traveller and this apparition would of necessity be limited I do not think this would be any great disadvantage to the motorist. The extra passenger having no weight would not increase the consumption of petrol per mile, and thus would have no terrors at all to the modern users of the road (Maxwell, 1924, p70).

Perhaps ghosts have to ripen a little before they can get phatasmagoric, and by the time they're ready to rumble, cars get invented, powered flight becomes common, and the iPhone 7 gets released. Everything must be very confusing. It's kind of a non-sequitur to be a headless horseback hitchhiker in a forest that is no longer traversed by horse. You might just go into the light out of sheer boredom. Nevertheless, given the afterlife, should it exist is just an extension of our existence by other means, Art Linkletter's maxim, "the four stages of man are infancy, childhood, adolescence, and obsolescence" no doubt still applies.

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thoughts on "The Headless Hitchhiker of St. Leonard's Forest"

1. busterggisaid:

November 14, 2016 at 5:21 am

Seems to me that if Leonard lived in the Weald, a few hundred miles away from the monastary that's some serious hermiting.

• EsoterX said:

November 14, 2016 at 5:24 am

Maybe he just occasionally dropped in when he felt like administering a smackdown to a dragon. Everyone needs a hobby...

2. Rose Brightflame ™said:

November 28, 2016 at 10:22 am

Actually, He pilgrimed to the area..

Blog at WordPress.com.

The Holy Foreskin - Medievalists.net

December 9, 2013 by Medievalists.net

When I first heard about the *Sanctum Praeputium* I actually thought it was a joke thought up by some medievalist. Apparently some medieval people thought so too!



Depiction of the Circumcision of Jesus around 1500

Relics played an important role in medieval Christianity. The physical remains of saints and holy figures were considered an essential part of the faith, offering a powerful connection with Heaven. As one twelfth-century monk wrote, "the divine power works through things that have been consecrated by use and contact with the hands," of the saints. They were often used to perform miraculous healing, and could be brought out during peace talks between rivals.

The relics could be man-made objects, such as cloaks or shoes, or they could be the body parts of the saints themselves – a tooth, hand, or even a

head – the head of John the Baptist was particularly popular. There was intense demand by churches to have as many as relics as they could, the more prominent the better, as they drew in eager worshippers like tourists today. Some churches and monasteries would list hundreds of relics in their collection. The trade in these holy goods would lead to many frauds, thefts and plundering – the conquest of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade saw much of the city's relics being taken away to western Europe.

The most important relics were those associated with Jesus Christ – such as the True Cross where he died upon, or the mother's milk of Mary. However, since Jesus was said to ascend to Heaven with his body, there could not be any of his own bodily remains left – except, perhaps, those that he left behind before he was killed, such as his blood or his finger nails.

All this brings us to the story of Jesus' circumcision, which the Roman Catholic Church celebrated eight days after his birth on January 1st. Following the Jewish rite, Jesus was circumcised, which leaves the question of what became of his foreskin.



Very few articles have been written on the topic of the Holy Foreskin, partly because in the year 1900 the Roman Catholic Church threatened to excommunicate anyone who did so. However, Robert Palazzo bravely did his research and his article "The Veneration of the Sacred Foreskin(s) of Baby Jesus: A Documentary Analysis," offers some interesting details about this relic. He notes that apocryphal gospels, such as the *The First Gospel of Baby Jesus*, which was written sometime before the 6th century, described how the foreskin was kept and passed down from generation to generation.

Jesus' circumcision

By the eleventh century, several churches in Europe explained they had the Holy Foreskin – the story often went something like this – Jesus' mother Mary kept the foreskin, along with the umbilical cord, and later gave it to Mary Magdalene. We then jump forward several centuries to the time of Charlemagne, when an angel gave the relic to the Emperor. From there it went to this place or that place, including to Rome. In 1421, it was even sent to Cathernine of Valois in England, so that it would bring good fortune (and a pregnancy) to her marriage with Henry V.

Palazzo has been able to find at least 31 churches in Europe that claimed to have the Holy Foreskin sometime during the Middle Ages, including ones in Paris, Antwerp, Bologna, Compostela and Toulouse.

Meanwhile, one can also read a lot of theological commentary about whether or not the Holy Foreskin could be real, much of it negative. For example, Anastasius Sinaita, a seventh-century writer, commented:

We can be sure that he, having voluntarily submitted himself to the act of circumcision, will have kept his foreskin, so that it could be restored to his body following his resurrection, thus allowing him to ascend to his heavenly father with a perfect body, entire and intact.

The Czech reformer John Hus (1369-1415) added, "To teach that Christ's foreskin survives is just as foolish as to teach that Christ's head survives, cut off from his body."

Meanwhile the mystic Catherine of Siena, wrote in her letters of getting a wedding ring from Jesus that he made from his foreskin. An even stranger story was told by Agnes Blannbekin (1244-1315), who revealed to her confessor:

She began to think about the foreskin of Christ, where it may be located...And behold, soon she felt with the greatest sweetness on her tongue a little piece of skin like the skin of an egg, which she swallowed. After she had swallowed it, she again felt the little skin on her tongue with sweetness as before, and again she swallowed it. And this happened about a hundred times.



Circumcision._Huntington_Library

The whole matter was even brought before Pope Innocent III, who was asked to decide whether or not the foreskin and umbilical cord was a true relic. The Pope replied, "Rather than attempt rash answers to such questions, it is better that they be left entirely to God." This seems to be the line that the Papacy has taken since, although as the idea became criticized and mocked by Protestants, the Holy Foreskin has been gradually hidden away and not talked about by the church.

The last place known to have publicly shown the Holy Foreskin was the Italian village of Calcata, which lies 30 miles north of Rome. The locals claimed that the relic had been there since 1527 and every year on January 1st, it would be taken out of the local church and paraded around. Then in 1983, it mysteriously disappeared, taken from a shoebox underneath the priest's bed. Many locals believe that it was the

Vatican that was responsible for taking away their precious relic. It has, however, brought an end to one of the strangest stories of medieval Christianity.

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Filed Under: Features Tagged With: Ecclesiastical History, Religious Life Tweet

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The Lost Boy of Rehoboth

thebridgewatertriangle.com



The Lost Boy of Rehoboth



The swamps of the Bridgewater Triangle have always been regarded as places to be avoided. Children whose homes abutted these dark and dangerous areas AND DISAPPEARS were adamantly warned by parents never to venture into the thick and often unsurpassable terrain. Disappearances in the woods and swamps of the Bridgewater Triangle is an area of research I have only recently delved into...and I am shocked at what I am finding: Case after case of disappearances, most of them children, who disappeared right on or near their family homesteads. Most of these stories I have yet to fully investigate, so at this time I can't report if these cases were ever solved, if the children were ever found. Other cases involve adults who went into missing in the woods and were found, but their memories of what happened are murky or non-existent.

This story I am about to tell is one of the most interesting I came across in my research, the search for a lost boy in Rehoboth. So far only one other case that I have happened across can compare to its strangeness; that story involving a woman who disappeared in the woods of AbingtoIn March of 1934 a Rehoboth boy disappeared from his family farm while playing with his sister. 4 1/2-year old Alden Johnson's screams were heard by neighbors, who interpreted the cries as being made by a child in a pain. One witness thought a child had been struck by a car; another suggested it sounded like a child was snatched by kidnapper.

The search began immediately. The area was combed in a two-mile radius around the homestead. "Ponds had been dynamited and pumped out. There was a ray of hope when nothing was found there. Houses and barns had been searched. The possibility of kidnapping or that he been carried off by a hit and run driver was considered and ruled out. There remained only the woods, and experienced woodsmen and State police had search them."

Twenty-four hours later, the boy's family and searchers began to fear the worst: That "Young Aldie" was dead in the woods, having perished from exposure. The night before had brought a storm to the area and the temperatures had teetered around freezing, pounding the area with freezing rain. The search for the boy was the biggest and most extensive search for any lost person to date at the time. Night was close to falling again on that cold March evening when local C.C.C. (Civil Conservation Corps) members, working in nearby swamp two miles away from where Aldie disappeared, decided to take matters into their own hands. They were packing up to leave their camp and head to their next assignment in Foxboro when the idea came to them. They had just starting searching the swamp when out of nowhere, the little boy appeared and casually walked up to one of the men. The boy looked very happy and not lost at all. Aldie smiled, held up a bundle of

twigs and asked the C.C.C. worker if he wanted to buy some flowers. The Civil Conservation Corps worker said of the state that the boy was in when he found him, "He seemed to be in a daze, but he was smart. He said, "Wanta buy some flowers? And he held out what he had--sprigs and limbs of shrub growth in his hand. I said sure and he seemed delighted." The worker yelled out, "I found him!" And the men all cheered.

"Young Aldie was asked if he had been afraid. He hadn't been. He had just been picking flowers, he explained, and he could sell them....He was still trying to sell the shrubs and twigs for which he started out on an expedition that brought about the greatest mobilization in searches in the State's recent history."



Safe with his parents, the boy reported remembering nothing. He didn't seem to know where he was or that any time had gone by since he disappeared. Or what had made him scream so frightfully. All that the little boy remembered was that suddenly he was compelled to leave his sister and go into the woods to pick some flowers. And that if he did that he could sell those flowers and could be rich. When he looked at his twigs, he still saw flowers.

He never felt the cold, the rain, had no memory of seeing the C.C.C. workers bonfire which had been going all night...in a swamp that is only known today for one thing: The home of Anawan Rock.

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Japan Powered November 27, 2016 Chris Kincaid



About one thousand years ago (but according to the dates of the story 744 years ago) the temple of "Sanin-san-gen Do" was founded. That was in 1132. 'San-ju-san-gen Do"means hall of thirty-three spaces; and there are said to be over 33,333 figures of the Goddess Kwannon, the Goddess of Mercy, in the temple to-day. Before the temple was built, in a village near by stood a willow tree of great size. It marked the playing-ground of all

the village children, who swung on its branches, and climbed on its limbs. It afforded shade to the aged in the heat of summer, and in the evenings, when work was done, many were the village lads and lasses who vowed eternal love under its branches. The tree seemed an influence for good to all. Even the weary traveler could sleep peacefully and almost dry under its branches. Alas, even in those times men were often ruthless with regard to trees. One day the villagers announced an intention to cut it down and use it to build a bridge across the river.

There lived in the village a young farmer named Heitaro, a great favorite, who had lived near the old tree all his days, as his forefathers had done; and he was greatly against cutting it down.

Such a tree should be respected, thought he. Had it not braved the storms of hundreds of years? In the heat of summer what pleasure it afforded the children! Did it not give to the weary shelter, and to the love-smitten a sense of romance? All these thoughts Heitaro impressed upon the villagers. Sooner than approve your cutting it down/ he said, "I will give you as many of my own trees as you require to build the bridge. You must leave this dear old willow alone for ever/

The villagers readily agreed. They also had a secret veneration for the old tree.

Heitaro was delighted, and readily found wood with which to build the bridge.

Some days later Heitaro, returning from his work, found standing by the willow a beautiful girl.

Instinctively he bowed to her. She returned the bow. They spoke together of the tree, its age and beauty. They seemed, in fact, to be drawn towards each other by a common sympathy. Heitaro was sorry when she said that she must be going, and bade him good-day. That evening his mind was far from being fixed on the ordinary things of life. "Who was the lady under the willow tree? How I wish I could see her again!"thought he. There was no sleep for Heitaro that night. He had caught the fever of love.

Next day he was at his work early; and he remained at it all day, working doubly hard, so as to try and forget the lady of the willow tree; but on his way home in the evening, behold, there was the lady again! This time she came forward to greet him in the most friendly way.

"Welcome, good friend!" she said. "Come and rest under the branches of the willow you love so well, for you must be tired."

Heitaro readily accepted this invitation, and not only did he rest, but also he declared his love.

Day by day after this the mysterious girl (whom no others had seen) used to meet Heitaro, and at last she promised to marry him if he asked no questions as to her parents or friends. "I have none," she said. "I can only promise to be a good and faithful wife, and tell you that I love you with all my heart and soul. Call me, then, "Higo," J and I will be your wife."

Next day Heitaro took Higo to his house, and they were married. A son was born to them in a little less than a year, and became their absorbing joy. There was not a moment of their spare time in which either Heitaro or his wife was not playing with the child, whom they called Chiyodo. It is doubtful if a more happy home could have been found in all Japan than the house of Heitaro, with his good wife Higo and their beautiful child.

Alas, where in this world has complete happiness ever been known to last? Even did the gods permit this, the laws of man would not.

When Chiyodo had reached the age of five years—the most beautiful boy in the neighbourhood—the ex-Emperor Toba decided to build in Kyoto an immense temple to Kwannon. He would contribute 1001 images of the Goddess of Mercy.

The ex-Emperor Toba's wish having become known, orders were given by the authorities to collect timber for the building of the vast temple; and so it came to pass that the days of the big willow tree were numbered, for it would be wanted, with many others, to form the roof.

Heitaro tried to save the tree again by offering every other he had on his land for nothing, but that was in vain. Even the villagers became anxious to see their willow tree built into the temple. It would bring them good luck, they thought, and in any case be a handsome gift of theirs towards the great temple.

The fatal time arrived. One night, when Heitaro and his wife and child had retired to rest and were sleeping, Heitaro was awakened by the sound of axes chopping. To his astonishment, he found his beloved wife sitting up in her bed, gazing earnestly at him, while tears rolled down her cheeks and she was sobbing bitterly.

"My dearest husband," she said with choking voice, "pray listen to what I tell you now, and do not doubt me. This is, unhappily, not a dream. When we married I begged you not to ask me my history, and you have never done so, but I said I would tell you some day if there should be a real occasion to do so. Unhappily, that occasion has now arrived, my dear husband. I am no less a thing than the spirit of the willow tree you loved, and so generously saved six years ago. It was to repay you for this great kindness that I appeared to you in human form under the tree, hoping that I could live with you and make you happy for your whole life. Alas, it cannot be! They are cutting down the willow. How I feel every stroke of their axes! I must return to die, for I am part of it. My heart breaks to think also of leaving my darling child Chiyodo and of his great sorrow when he knows that his mother is no longer in the world. Comfort him, dearest husband! He is old enough and strong enough to be with you now without a mother and yet not suffer. I wish you both long lives of prosperity. Farewell, my dearest! I must be off to the willow, for I hear them striking with their axes harder and harder, and it weakens me each blow they give.

Heitaro awoke his child just as Higo disappeared, wondering to himself if it were not a dream. No : it was no dream. Chiyodo, awaking, stretched his arms in the direction his mother had gone, crying bitterly and imploring her to come back.

"My darling child," said Heitaro, "she has gone. She cannot come back. Come, let us dress, and go and see her funeral. Your mother was the spirit of the Great Willow."

A little later, at the break of day, Heitaro took Chiyodo by the hand and led him to the tree. On reaching it they found it down, and already lopped of its branches. The feelings of Heitaro may be well imagined.

Strange! In spite of united efforts, the men were unable to move the stem a single inch towards the river, in which it was to be floated to Kyoto.

On seeing this, Heitaro addressed the men.

"My friends," said he, "the dead trunk of the tree which you are trying to move contains the spirit of my wife. Perhaps, if you will allow my little son Chiyodo to help you, it will be more easy for you; and he would like to help in showing his last respects to his mother.'

The woodcutters were fully agreeable, and, much to their astonishment, as Chiyodo came to the back end of the log and pushed it with his little hand, the timber glided easily towards the river, his father singing the while an "Uta." There is a well-known song or ballad in the "Uta" style said to have sprung from this event; it is sung to the present day by men drawing heavy weights or doing hard labor:

Is it not sad to see the little fellow,

Who sprang from the dew of the Kumano Willow,

And is thus far budding well?

Heave ho, heave ho, pull hard, my lads.

The wagon could not be drawn when it came to the front of Heitaro's house, so his little five-year-old boy Chiyodo was obliged to help, and they sang :—

Is it not sad to see the little fellow,

Who sprang from the dew of the Kumano Willow,

And is thus far budding well?

Heave ho, heave ho, pull hard, my lads.

There are many different versions of this story. This is one of the most detailed. Japanese folklore rarely end "happily ever after." The stories capture the reality of intertwined happiness and sorrow. Even the closest lovers must part for a time when one of them dies. However, these stories aren't pessimistic. Rather, they seek to teach appreciation. We appreciate what we have more when we know it must end.

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Airport employs pig to calm nervous flyers

By Kirstie McCrum 16:50, 7 DEC 2016 Updated 17:15, 7 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

LiLou is a much-loved addition to the customer service team at one busy airport used to soothe customers who are concerned as they await next flight



src="http://brightcove01.brightcove.com/24/4221396001/201612/1494/422139600 vs.jpg?pubId=4221396001" class="video-thumbnail"/>

Wagging her tail happily and spinning round for treats, this piggy in a tutu is here to make nervous air passengers feel better.

Little LiLou the pig has just joined the welcome brigade at San Francisco International Airport, and she's quickly become a favourite fixture.

The pig, who is a Juliana breed, is one of the special creatures who can help soothe customers who are concerned as they await connecting flights.

Animals like LiLou wear vests that read 'Pet Me!' so people know that they are there to help as part of the WAG Brigade.

Christopher Birch, the Director of Guest Experience, said: "Since its launch in 2013, the SFO Wag Brigade has become a favourite amenity among travellers.

"With the addition of LiLou, we can look forward to more moments of surprise and delight for guests at our airport."

San Francisco SPCA Animal Assisted Therapy Manager, Dr Jennifer Henley, said: "We have more than 300 dog, cat and rabbit volunteer teams, but LiLou is the first pig in our program.

"It's wonderful to witness the surprise and delight that LiLou brings to people during therapy visits."

Therapy dogs are already deployed at airports in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose, Miami and Edmonton in Canada.

Earlier this year Daniel went viral after people saw the images of the emotional support DUCK supporting his owner onboard a flight.

Flying on board as a companion to Carla Fitzgerald, Daniel the duck was there to offer a calming influence when she had to catch a plane.

The duck was snapped by Mark Essig, who met the bird on a flight from Milwaukee to Charlotte, NC.

He tweeted: "[Daniel] is an Indian Runner (an Indonesian breed), a certified emotional support duck, four years old, wears a Captain America diaper."

And in January, Jodie Smalley flew with her 'emotional support' turkey, Easter, from her home in Seattle, Washington state, to her relatives' house in Salt Lake City, Utah

After the plane touched down, she lovingly pushed the feathered creature through the airport in a wheelchair, before taking it to her brother's house for festive celebrations.

Emotional support animals may be used by people with a range of physical, psychiatric, or intellectual issues. An animal does not need specific training to become an emotional support animal.

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Creepy LA: The Los Angeles Halloween They Moved The Headstones, But Not the Bodies!

Blog

I don't want to alarm anyone – but you know how the haunting in Poltergeist (based in Simi Valley) was due to the housing tract having been built on a former cemetery? In Los Angeles short history, this sort of thing is terrifyingly common.

Here are three tales of former cemeteries where bodies still likely remain.

Founders Memorial Park aka Dead Man's Park

6755 Newlin Ave, Whittier, CA 90601

This palatial park was created over two former adjacent cemeteries: Mount Olive, which opened in the 1880s, and Broadway, which opened shortly after 1900. Over 1200 bodies were buried here, but eventually the grounds stopped being maintained, frequently vandalized and mostly abandoned.

In 1958, city officials declared the land a public nuisance, saying that the cemeteries "contained vermin and unsafe attractions for children." Efforts were made to notify families to gain permission to move the bodies to other cemeteries. While all of the headstones were removed – either eventually taken by the families, or relocated to the Pio Pico Mansion and Whitter Museum – many of the bodies still remain.

Dubbed "Dead Man's Park," the location is a favorite spot for paranormal investigators. Here is one field report.

Cathedral High School

1253 Bishops Rd, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Perhaps as a sign of an embracement, or appearement, of the dead still buried underneath Cathedral High School, their football team is called The Phantoms.

The school is on the grounds of the former Calvary Cemetery, which held its last burial in 1886. It had become over crowded with graves. Soon thereafter, crypts were plundered of both contents and building materials, the site became ripe for grave robbers, and even the opposite: illegal, undocumented burials.

When the decision was made to build a school on the land in 1925, interment records documenting how many bodies were there, and where, had been lost, making it all but impossible to ensure every grave was properly moved. It is assumed as a practicality that scores still remain buried beneath Cathedral High.

During construction of a school stadium in 2007, numerous gravestones were unearthed, and are now displayed prominently at the school. Perhaps it's due to this acknowledgment and care for the deceased that ghost sightings are scarce.

Paradise Memorial Park

11541 Florence Ave, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

Suspicions about Paradise Cemetery began in the early 1990s after family members who went to visit the graves of passed loved ones would find the headstones were missing, often with new marker with a strangers name in its place. Subsequent investigations resulted in convictions of the cemetery operators for pocketing maintenance funds, and still many unanswered questions of where the dead still rest.

From the LA Times:

In 1995, state investigators discovered that Paradise employees routinely dug up caskets to resell sites and sometimes piled bodies in a single grave. Investigators also found a 7-foot-high pile of dirt containing human bones.

(A 1995 New York Times article reveals that this was just one example of many in Los Angeles and throughout California of abuses by cemetery operators who didn't seem interested in ensuring the dead would ever "rest in peace.")

Nearly a quarter century before this particular scandal, the LA Times reported that the remains of 14 babies were reinterred in order to widen Florence Ave. Only 8 of the 14 babies' families could be found to give permission, so an "unprecedented agreement" was made between the city of Santa Fe Springs and cemetery management protecting them from any claims for moving the bodies.

At least one person has reported a seemingly angry spirit on the grounds.

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Thief steals officer's uniform from Philadelphia courthouse

yahoo.com

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Police in Philadelphia are searching for the thief who stole parts of an officer's uniform from a bench outside a courtroom at the city's Criminal Justice Center.

The 25th District officer took off his uniform jacket, badge and hat while preparing to testify in a courtroom on the Center City building's fifth floor Wednesday morning.

Police say the officer left his belongings on the bench and found that they were missing when he returned 15 minutes later.

Surveillance video from the courthouse shows a man between 40 and 50 years old stuffing the jacket and hat into a bag before leaving the building.

Investigators say the suspect was only on the floor for about seven minutes. He was last seen heading toward Broad Street.

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Thieves pose as mannequins before stealing £10,000 worth of clothes metro.co.uk

Sofia Petkar for Metro.co.ukWednesday 7 Dec 2016 2:12 pm



Thieves stole £10,000 worth of designer clothes from Beales (Picture: Brighton Argus/Solent News)

In scenes usually reserved for the movies, a gang of thieves have managed to pull off quite the crime.

They got away with £10,000 worth of designer clothes from the Beales department store in Worthing – after posing as mannequins alongside real dummies.

They struck as soon as staff and customers left for the day, leaving them with plenty of time to

leisurely browse the aisles.

Sussex Police were left baffled as to how the gang managed to get into the store without setting off any alarms.

The alarm was only triggered as they escaped with their haul via the fire escape.

An assistant at the store aptly described the heist as reminiscent of scenes from Home Alone 2: Lost in New York – where bad guys Harry and Marv plot to rob a toy store in similar fashion.

Beales is fitted with a sophisticated alarm system, with sensors that should detect movement, and would have 'spotted' the burglars had they tried to break in.



The brazen burglars are believed to have posed as mannequins (Picture: Getty)

sensor alarms and cameras.

The brazen burglars are believed to have posed as mannequins (Picture: Getty)

'It was only triggered when they left the store

– it was a very well-orchestrated crime', said
the assistant, who asked not to be
named. 'They must have secreted themselves
and pretended to be mannequins.

'They probably dressed in clothes identical to those worn by the mannequins and stood there, not moving a muscle till the shop shut and everyone went home.

'They took oilskin jackets, high-end designer clothes and the like. It showed incredible nerve – the store is equipped from top to bottom with

'They must have stood there with the mannequins not daring to move a muscle – imagine if they wanted to sneeze or had an itch they couldn't scratch!'

A spokeswoman for Sussex Police said: 'We are investigating after the break-in was reported at Beales store in South Street.

'Clothing was stolen and the burglars left the store through the fire escape which set off the alarm. It is not clear how they got in.

'Officers are continuing to investigate. Anyone who saw anything or has any information is asked to contact police on 101 or on Crimestoppers anonymously.'

A Beales spokesman declined to comment.

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This is why your dog always poos pointing north

metro.co.uk

Rob Waugh for Metro.co.ukWednesday 14 Dec 2016 4:24 pm MylesGoode/METRO

Humans like to laugh at dogs turning round and round before they relieve themselves – but the dogs (whether they know it or not) are doing something that humans can't do.

Or at least we couldn't do it without a compass and understanding neighbours.

Dogs sense the Earth's magnetic field – with dogs avoiding relieving themselves if they're facing east-to-west, and preferring a nice north-south poo every time.

Henry Nicholls of New Scientist says, 'Dogs prefer to defecate with their spine aligned in a north-south position, and they use Earth's magnetic field to help them position themselves. It has long been suspected that animals such as turtles and birds use magnetoreception to navigate, but it is becoming increasingly obvious that many other animals sense magnetism too.'

In a study by the Czech University of Life Sciences in the Czech Republic, scientists analysed the – ahem – movements of 70 dogs from 37 different breeds.

Share your results

Share your results Tweet your results

Dogs consistently prefer to be aligned north to south, say the researchers, after watching 1,893 dogs defecate.

Who says science isn't a fun job?

What's less clear is how the dogs decide.

The researchers write, 'It is still enigmatic why the dogs do align at all, whether they do it 'consciously' (i.e., whether the magnetic field is perceived) ... or whether its reception is controlled on the vegetative level (they 'feel better/more comfortable or worse/less comfortable' in a certain direction).'

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Timeline of religion

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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The **timeline of religion** is a chronological catalogue of important and noteworthy religious events in pre-historic and modern times. This article reaches into pre-historic times, as the bulk of the human religious experience predates written history. Written history (the age of formal writing) is only c.5000 years old.^[1] A lack of written records results in most of the knowledge of pre-historic religion being derived from archaeological records and other indirect sources, and from suppositions. Much pre-historic religion is subject to continued debate.

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Credit Card

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Pre-History

Pre-50th millennium BCE

Homo heidelbergensis^{[2][3]} deliberately disposed of deceased individuals, usually in funerary caches. The graves, located throughout Eurasia (e.g. the Pontnewydd Cave (Wales), Atapuerca Mountains (Spain), Qafzeh, Es Skhul, Krapina (Croatia),^[2] are believed to represent the beginnings of ceremonial rites, although there is some debate about this.^[4] Neanderthals placed their deceased in simple graves with little or no concern for grave goods or markers; however, their graves occasionally appeared with limestone blocks in or on them, possibly an archaic form of grave marking.^[2] These practices were possibly the result of empathetic feelings towards fellow tribe members; for example, an infant buried in the Dederiyeh Cave after its joints had disarticulated was placed with concern for the correct anatomical arrangement of its body parts.^[2]

98,000 BCE

In the area of present-day France and Belgium, Neanderthals began excarnating their dead prior to burial.^[2]

50th to 11th millenna BCE

40,000 BCE

The remains of one of the earliest anatomically modern humans to be cremated was buried near Lake Mungo. [5][6][7][8][9]

38,000 BCE

The Aurignacian^[10] Löwenmensch figurine, the oldest known zoomorphic (animal-shaped) sculpture in the world and one of the oldest known sculptures in general, was made. The sculpture has also been interpreted as anthropomorphic, giving human characteristics to an animal, although it may have represented a deity.^[11]

All convincing evidence for Neanderthal burials ceased. Roughly coinciding with the time period of the Homo sapiens' introduction to Europe and decline of the Neanderthals, [2] individual skulls and/or long bones began appearing, heavily stained with red ochre and separately buried. This practice may be the origin of sacred relics. [2] The oldest discovered "Venus figurines" appeared in graves. Some were deliberately broken or repeatedly stabbed, possibly representing the murders of the men with whom they were buried, [2] or owing to some other unknown social dynamic.

25,000-21,000 BCE

Clear examples of burials are present in Iberia, Wales, and eastern Europe. These, too, incorporate the heavy use of red ochre. Additionally, various objects were included in the graves (e.g. periwinkle shells, weighted clothing, dolls, possible drumsticks, mammoth ivory beads, fox teeth pendants, panoply of ivory artifacts, "baton" antlers, flint blades etc.).^[2]

13,000-8,000 BCE

Noticeable burial activity resumed. Prior mortuary activity had either taken a less obvious form or contemporaries retained some of their burial knowledge in the absence of such activity. Dozens of men, women, and children were being buried in the same caves which were used for burials 10,000 years beforehand. All these graves are delineated by the cave walls and large limestone blocks. The burials share a number of characteristics (such as use of ochre, and shell and mammoth ivory jewellery) that go back thousands of years. Some burials were double, comprising an adult male with a juvenile male buried by his

side. They were now beginning to take on the form of modern cemeteries. Old burials were commonly redug and moved to make way for new ones, with the older bones often being gathered and cached together. Large stones may have acted as grave markers. Pairs of ochred antlers were sometimes mounted on poles within the cave; this is compared to the modern practice of leaving flowers at a grave. [2]

10th Millennium to 51st century BCE

9831 BCE

The Neolithic Revolution began and resulted in a worldwide population explosion. The first cities, states, kingdoms and organized religions began to emerge. The early states were usually theocracies, in which the political power was justified by religious prestige. This was the beginning of the First Sangam period in South India. [12]

9130-7370 BCE

This was the apparent period of use of Göbekli Tepe, one of the oldest human-made sites of worship yet discovered; evidence of similar usage has also been found in another nearby site, Nevalı Çori. [13]

7500-5700 BCE

The settlements of Catalhoyuk developed as a likely spiritual centre of Anatolia. Possibly practising worship in communal shrines, its inhabitants left behind numerous clay figurines and impressions of phallic, feminine and hunting scenes.

5500-4500 BCE

The Proto-Indo-Europeans (PIE) emerged, probably within the Pontic-Caspian steppe (though their exact *urheimat* is debated). The PIE peoples developed a religion focused on sacrificial ideology, which would influence the religions of the descendant Indo-European cultures throughout Europe, Anatolia and the Indian subcontinent. It is said to be the period of Ramayana in India, beginning with the birth in 5114 BCE of Lord Sri Ram, a central figure of Hinduism.

The Ancient Era

50th to 26th century BCE

c.3750 BCE

The Proto-Semitic people emerged from a generally accepted *urheimat* in the Arabian peninsula. The Proto-Semitic people would migrate throughout the Near East into Mesopotamia, Egypt, Ethiopia and the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Their religion would influence their descendant's cultures and faiths, including the Abrahamic religions.

3300-1300 BCE

The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) was a Bronze Age civilization (3300–1300 BCE; mature period 2600–1900 BCE) in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent, noted for its cities built of brick, roadside drainage system and multi-storeyed houses, as well as for creating artifacts which could be linked to prevedic religions. It was the period of the Mahabharata in India and the period in which Hindu Sacred Scripture Bhagavad Gita was written. 3112 BCE marked the birth of Lord Sri Krishna, an Incarnation of Lord Vishnu of the Hindu Trinity.

3102 BCE

This was the beginning of Kaliyuga, a new age among the followers of Indian religions. [14][15][16][17][18]

3100 BCE

The initial form of Stonehenge was completed. The circular bank and ditch enclosure, about 110 metres (360 ft) across, may have been completed with a timber circle.

3100-2900 BCE

Newgrange, the 250,000 ton (226,796.2 tonne) passage tomb aligned to the winter solstice in Ireland, was built.^[19]

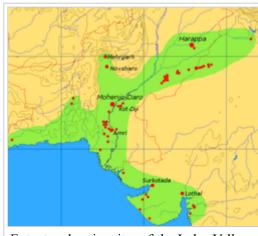
3000 BCE

Sumerian Cuneiform emerged from the proto-literate Uruk period, allowing the codification of beliefs and creation of detailed historical religious records.

The second phase of Stonehenge was completed and appeared to function as the first enclosed cremation cemetery in the British Isles.

2635-2610 BCE

The oldest surviving Egyptian Pyramid was commissioned by Pharaoh Djoser.



Extent and major sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. The shaded area does not include recent excavations.

2600 BCE

Stonehenge began to take on the form of its final phase. The wooden posts were replaced with bluestone. It began taking on an increasingly complex setup (including an altar, a portal, station stones, etc.) and shows consideration of solar alignments.

2560 BCE

This the approximate time accepted as the completion of the Great Pyramid of Giza, the oldest pyramid of the Giza Plateau.

25th to 16th centuries BCE

2494-2345 BCE

The first of the oldest surviving religious texts, the Pyramid Texts, was composed in Ancient Egypt.

2200 BCE

The Minoan Civilization developed in Crete. Citizens worshipped a variety of Goddesses.

2150-2000 BCE

The earliest surviving versions of the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh—originally titled *He who Saw the Deep (Sha naqba īmuru)* or *Surpassing All Other Kings (Shūtur eli sharrī)*—were written.

2000-1850 BCE

This is the traditionally accepted period in which the Judeo-Christian/Islamic patriarch Abraham lived. Probably born in Ur Kaśdim or Haran, he died in Machpelah, Canaan.

1700-1100 BCE

The oldest of the Hindu Vedas (scriptures), the Rig Veda was composed.

1600 BCE

The ancient development of Stonehenge came to an end.

1500 BCE

The Vedic Age began in India after the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

15th to 11th centuries BCE

1351 or 1353 BCE

The reign of Akhenaten, sometimes credited with starting the earliest known monotheistic religion, in Ancient Egypt.

1300-1000 BCE

The "standard" Akkadian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh was edited by Sin-liqe-unninni.

1250-600 BCE

The Upanishads (Vedic texts) were composed, containing the earliest emergence of some of the central religious concepts of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

1200 BCE

The Greek Dark Age began.

1200 BCE

The Olmecs built the earliest pyramids and temples in Central America. [20]

10th to 1st centuries BCE

877-777 BCE

The life of Parshva, 23rd Tirthankar of Jainism. [21][22]

800 BCE

The Greek Dark Age ends.

600-500 BCE

The Earliest Confucian writing, Shu Ching, incorporates ideas of harmony and heaven.

599-527 BCE

The life of Mahavira, 24th and last Tirthankar of Jainism. [23]

600-400 BCE

The probable life of Laozi, author of the Tao Te Ching, considered the founding work of philosophical Taoism.

563 BCE

Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism was born.

551 BCE

Confucius, founder of Confucianism, was born.^[20]

440 BCE

Zoroastrianism entered recorded history.

399 BCE

Socrates was tried for impiety.

300 BCE

Theravada Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka by the Venerable Mahinda.

250 BCE

The Third Buddhist council was convened.

150 BCE

Fragments of the oldest surviving Hebrew Bible manuscripts date to c.2nd century BCE.

140 BCE

The earliest grammar of Sanskrit literature was composed by Pāṇini.

100 BCE-500 CE

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, constituting the foundational texts of Yoga, were composed.

The Common Era

1st to 5th Centuries

c.7 BCE-c.36 CE

The life of Jesus of Nazareth, the central figure of Christianity.

31-36

The death of John the Baptist.

50-62

The first Christian Council was convened in Jerusalem.

70

The Siege of Jerusalem, the Destruction of the Temple and the rise of Rabbinic Judaism.

220

Manichaean Gnosticism was formed by the prophet Mani.

250

Some of the oldest parts of the Ginza Rba, a core text of Mandaean Gnosticism, were written.

250-900

Classic Mayan step pyramids were constructed.

300

The oldest known version of the Tao Te Ching was written on bamboo tablets.

313

The Edict of Milan decreed religious toleration in the Roman empire.

325

The first ecumenical council (the Council of Nicaea) was convened to attain a consensus on doctrine through an assembly representing all Christendom. It established the original Nicene Creed and fixed the date of Easter. It also confirmed the primacy of the Sees of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, and granted the See of Jerusalem a position of honour.

c.350

The oldest record of the complete biblical texts (the Codex Sinaiticus) survives in a Greek translation called the Septuagint, dating to the 4th century CE.

380

Theodosius I declared Nicene Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire.

381

The second ecumenical council (the First Council of Constantinople) reaffirmed and revised the Nicene Creed, repudiating Arianism and Macedonianism.

381-391

Theodosius proscribed paganism within the Roman Empire.

393

A council of early Christian bishops listed and approved a biblical canon for the first time at the Synod of Hippo.

Middle Ages (5th to 15th centuries)

5th to 10th centuries

405

St. Jerome completed the Vulgate, the first Latin translation of the Bible.

410

The Western Roman Empire began to decline, signalling the onset of the Dark Ages.

424

The Assyrian Church of the East formally separated from the See of Antioch and the western Syrian Church.

431

The third ecumenical council (the First Council of Ephesus) was convened as a result of the controversial teachings of Nestorius of Constantinople. It repudiated Nestorianism, proclaimed the Virgin Mary as the *Theotokos* (the *God-bearer* or *Mother of God*). It also repudiated Pelagianism and again reaffirmed the Nicene Creed.

449

The Second Council of Ephesus declared support for Eutyches and attacked his opponents. Originally convened as an ecumenical council, its ecumenical nature was rejected by the Chalcedonians, who denounced the council as latrocinium.

451

The fourth ecumenical council (the Council of Chalcedon) rejected the Eutychian doctrine of monophysitism, adopting instead the Chalcedonian Creed. It reinstated those deposed in 449, deposed Dioscorus of Alexandria and elevated the bishoprics of Constantinople and Jerusalem to the status of patriarchates.

451

The Oriental Orthodox Church rejected the christological view put forth by the Council of Chalcedon and was excommunicated.

480-547

Benedict of Nursia wrote his Rule, laying the foundation of Western Christian monasticism.

553

The fifth ecumenical council (the Second Council of Constantinople) repudiated the Three Chapters as Nestorian and condemned Origen of Alexandria.

570-632

The life of Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh, the Prophet of Islam.

632-661

The Rashidun Caliphate heralded the Arab conquest of Persia, Egypt and Iraq, bringing Islam to those regions.

650

The verses of the Qur'an were compiled in the form of a book in the era of Uthman, the third Caliph of Islam.

661-750

The Umayyad Caliphate brought the Arab conquest of North Africa, Spain and Central Asia, marking the greatest extent of the Arab conquests and bringing Islam to those regions.

680-681

The sixth ecumenical council (the Third Council of Constantinople) rejected Monothelitism and Monoenergism.

c.680

The division between Sunni and Shiites Muslims developed.

692

The Quinisext Council (also known as the *Council in Trullo*), an amendment to the 5th and 6th ecumenical councils, established the Pentarchy.

712

Kojiki, the oldest Shinto text, was written. [20]

716-936

The migration of Zoroastrian (Parsi) communities from Persia to India began, caused by Muslim conquest of their lands and the ensuing persecution.

754

The latrocinium Council of Hieria supported iconoclasm.

787

The seventh ecumenical council (the Second Council of Nicaea) restored the veneration of icons and denounced iconoclasm.

788-820

The life of Hindu philosopher Adi Shankara, who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedānta.

c.850

The oldest extant manuscripts of the vocalized Masoretic text, upon which modern editions are based, date to 9th century CE.

11th to 15th centuries

1054

The Great Schism between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches was formalised.

1095-1099

The First Crusade led to the capture of Jerusalem.

1107-1110

Sigurd I of Norway led the Norwegian Crusade against Muslims in Spain, the Balearic Islands and in Palestine.

1147-1149

The Second Crusade was waged in response to the fall of the County of Edessa.

1189-1192

In the Third Crusade European leaders attempted to reconquer the Holy Land from Saladin.

1202-1204

The Fourth Crusade, originally intended to recapture Jerusalem, instead led to the sack of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire.

1206

The Delhi Sultanate was established.

1209-1229

The Albigensian Crusade was conducted to eliminate Catharism in Occitania, Europe.

1217-1221

With the Fifth Crusade, Christian leaders again attempted (but failed) to recapture Jerusalem.

1222-1282

The life of Nichiren Daishonin, the Buddha of the Latter Day of the Law and founder of Nichiren Buddhism. Based at the Nichiren Shoshu Head Temple Taisekiji (Japan), this branch of Buddhism teaches the importance of chanting the mantra *Nam Myōhō Renge Kyō*.

1228-1229

The Sixth Crusade won control of large areas of the Holy Land for Christian rulers, more through diplomacy than through fighting.

1229

The Codex Gigas was completed by Herman the Recluse in the Benedictine monastery of Podlažice near Chrudim.

1244

Jerusalem was sacked again, instigating the Seventh Crusade.

1270

The Eighth Crusade was launched by Louis IX of France but largely petered out when Louis died shortly after reaching Tunis.

1271-1272

The Ninth Crusade failed.

1320

Pope John XXII laid the groundwork for future witch-hunts with the formalisation of the persecution of witchcraft.

1378–1417

The Roman Catholic Church split during the Western Schism.

1469-1539

The life of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism.

1484

Pope Innocent VIII marked the beginning of the classical European witch-hunts with his papal bull Summis desiderantes.

1486-1534

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu popularised the chanting of the Hare Krishna and composed the Siksastakam (eight devotional prayers) in Sanskrit. His followers, Gaudiya Vaishnavas, revere him as a spiritual reformer, a

Hindu revivalist and an avatar of Krishna.

Early modern and Modern eras

16th Century

1500

African religious systems were introduced to the Americas, with the commencement of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

In the Spanish Empire, Catholicism was spread and encouraged through such institutions as the missions and the Inquisition.

1517

Martin Luther posted *The Ninety-Five Theses* on the door of All Saints' Church, Wittenberg, launching the Protestant Reformation.

1534

Henry VIII separated the English Church from Rome and made himself Supreme Head of the Church of England.

1562

The Massacre of Vassy sparked the first of a series of French Wars of Religion.

17th Century

1699

Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the Khalsa in Sikhism.

18th Century

1708

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the last Sikh guru, died after instituting the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, as the eternal Guru.

1770

Baron d'Holbach published *The System of Nature* said to be the first positive, unambiguous statement of atheism in the West. [24]

1781

Ghanshyam, later known as Sahajanand Swami/Swaminarayan, was born in Chhapaiya at the house of Dharmadev and Bhaktimata.

1789-1799

In the Dechristianisation of France^{[25][26]} the Revolutionary Government confiscated Church properties, banned monastic vows and, with the passage of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, removed control of the Church from the Pope and subordinated it as a department of the Government. The Republic also replaced the traditional Gregorian Calendar and abolished Christian holidays.

1791

Freedom of religion, enshrined in the Bill of Rights, was added as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, forming an early and influential secular government.

19th Century

1801

The French Revolutionary Government and Pope Pius VII entered into the Concordat of 1801. While Roman Catholicism regained some powers and became recognized as "the religion of the great majority of the French", it was not afforded the latitude it had enjoyed prior to the Revolution and was not re-established as the official state religion. The Church relinquished all claims to estate seized after 1790, the clergy was state salaried and was obliged to swear allegiance to the State. Religious freedom was restored.

1819-1850

The life of Siyyid 'Alí Muḥammad Shírází (Persian: سيد على محمد شيرازى) Bab, the founder of Bábism.

1817-1892

The life of Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

1830

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded by Joseph Smith.

1835-1908

The life of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the messianic Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

1836-1886

The life of Ramakrishna, saint and mystic of Bengal.

1841

Satguru Ram Singh Ji created the Namdhari sect within the Sikh religion.

1875

The Theosophical Society was formed in New York City by Helena Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge and others.

1879

Christian Science was granted its charter in Boston, Massachusetts.

1889

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established.

1893

Swami Vivekananda's first speech at The Parliament of World Religions, Chicago, brought the ancient philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the western world.

1899

Aradia (aka *The Gospel of the Witches*), one of the earliest books describing post witchhunt European religious Witchcraft, was published by Charles Godfrey Leland.^[27]

20th Century

1901

The incorporation of the Spiritualists' National Union legally representing Spiritualism in the United Kingdom.

1904

Thelema was founded by Aleister Crowley.

1905

In France the law on the Separation of the Churches and the State was passed, officially establishing state secularism and putting an end to the funding of religious groups by the state.^[28]

Becoming a place of pilgrimage for neo-druids and other pagans, the Ancient Order of Druids organised the first recorded reconstructionist ceremony in Stonehenge.

1908

The Khalifatul Masih was established in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community as the "Second Manifestation of God's Power".

1917

The October Revolution in Russia led to the annexation of all church properties and subsequent religious suppression.

The 1917 Constitution of Mexico made Mexico a secular state.

1920

The Self Realization Fellowship Church of all Religions with its headquarters in Los Angeles, CA, was founded by Paramahansa Yogananda.

1926

Cao Dai founded.

1929

The Cristero War, fought between the secular government and religious Christian rebels in Mexico, ended.

1930

The Rastafari movement began following the coronation of Haile Selassie I as Emperor of Ethiopia.

The Nation of Islam was founded in Detroit, Michigan.

1932

A neo-Hindu religious movement, the Brahma Kumaris or "Daughters of Brahma", started. Its origin can be traced to the group "Om Mandali", founded by Lekhraj Kripalani (1884–1969).

1939-1945

Millions of Jews were relocated and killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

1947

British India was partitioned into the Islamic nation of Pakistan and the secular nation of India with a Hindu majority.

1948

The modern state of Israel was created in Palestine as a homeland for the Jews.

1952

Scientology was created.

1954

Wicca was publicised by Gerald Gardner. [29]

1960s

Various Neopagan and New Age movements gained momentum.

1961

Unitarian Universalism was formed from the merger of Unitarianism and Universalism.^[30]

1962

The Church of All Worlds, the first American neo-pagan church, was formed by a group including Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart, and Richard Lance Christie.

1962-1965

The Second Vatican Council was convened. [31][32][33][34]

1965

Srila Prabhupada established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and introduced translations of the Bhagavad-Gita and Vedic Scriptures in mass production all over the world.

1966

Anton LaVey founded the Church of Satan. [35]

1972-1984

The Stonehenge free festivals started.^[36]

1972-2004

Germanic Neopaganism (aka Heathenism, Heathenry, Ásatrú, Odinism, Forn Siðr, Vor Siðr, and Theodism) began to experience a second wave of revival. [37][38][39][40][41][42][43][44][45][46][47][48][49][50][51][52]

1973

Claude Vorilhon established the Raëlian Movement and changed his name to Raël following a purported extraterrestrial encounter in December 1973.

1979

The Iranian Revolution resulted in the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran.

1981

The Stregherian revival continued. "The Book of the Holy Strega" and "The Book of Ways" Volume I & II were published.

1984

Operation Blue Star in the holiest site of the Sikhs, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, led to Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and adjoining regions, following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

1985

The Battle of the Beanfield forced an end to the Stonehenge free festivals. [36][53][54]

1989

Following the revolutions of 1989, the overthrow of many Soviet-style states allowed a resurgence in open religious practice in many Eastern European countries.^[55]

1990s

Reconstructionist Pagan movements (Celtic, Hellenic, Roman, Slavic, Baltic, Finnish, etc.) proliferate throughout Europe.

1993

The European Council convened in Copenhagen, Denmark, agreed to the Copenhagen Criteria, requiring religious freedom within all members and prospective members of the European Union.

1998

The Strega Arician Tradition was founded.^[56]

21st century

2000

The Palestinian Authority created the Second Intifada in Israel and the Palestinian territories.^{[57][58]} Although largely political in nature, the uprising centred on religion.^{[59][60]}

2001

21 Muslim terrorists from Al-Qaeda killed 2,977 on September 11, 2001 in the name of Jihad against the United States of America. Osama Bin Laden claimed responsibility and praised the attacks.^[61]

2001

In England and Wales, 390,127 people (almost 0.8%) stated their religion as Jedi on the 2001 Census forms, surpassing the numbers of Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists, and making it the fourth largest reported religion in the country. In the same census, 2.6% of the population of Brighton claimed to be Jedi.

2006

Sectarian rivalries exploded in Iraq between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, with each side targeting the other in terrorist acts, and bombings of mosques and shrines.^[62]

2008

Nepal, the world's only Hindu Kingdom, was declared a secular state by its Constituent Assembly after declaring the state a Republic on 28 May 2008.

2009

The Church of Scientology in France was fined €600,000 and several of its leaders were fined and imprisoned for defrauding new recruits of their savings. [63][64][65] The state failed to disband the church owing to legal changes occurring over the same time period. [65][66]

2011

Civil war broke out in Syria over domestic political issues. The country soon split along sectarian lines between Sunni, Alawite and Shiite Muslims. [67] War crimes and acts of genocide were committed by both parties as religious leaders on each side condemned the other as heretics. [68] The Syrian civil war soon became a battleground for regional sectarian unrest, as fighters joined the fight from as far away as North America and Europe, as well as Iran and the Arab states. [69]

2014

The Islamic Caliphate was established by the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in regions of war torn Syria and Iraq, drawing global support from radical Sunni Muslims. [70][71] This was a modern-day attempt to re-establish Islamic self-rule in accordance with strict adherence to Shariah- Islamic religious law. [72][73] In the wake of the Syrian civil war, Islamic extremists targeted the indigenous Arab Christian communities. In acts of genocide, numerous ancient Christian and Yazidi communities were evicted and threatened with death by various Muslim Shia fighter groups. [74] After ISIS terrorist forces infiltrated and took over large parts of northern Iraq from Syria, many ancient Christian and Yazidi enclaves were destroyed. [74][75][76][77]

See also

- Axis age
- Evolutionary origin of religions

- History of religions
- Holocene era
- Ionian stage
- Paleolithic Religion
- Prehistoric religion
- Religion and mythology
- Tarantian stage

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External links

- Patheos Interactive Tree Lens (http://www.patheos.com/Lenses/Tree.html)
- Interactive timeline illustrating the history of religion (http://www.religionstree.com/)
- Flash animation pausing at various significant conversions/conquests (http://www.mapsofwar.com/images/R eligion.swf)

history (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Timeline of religion&action=history)

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Categories: Religion timelines

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Tiny, Magical Shops For Mice Are Popping Up In Sweden

huffingtonpost.com

This is like something from a fairytale.

12/09/2016 01:01 pm ET



Artists in Sweden have constructed a restaurant for rodents.

If you happen to be walking through the Swedish city of Malmö, make sure to pay attention to the little details.

If you take a look down you may notice something amazing inside a basement window in the neighborhood of Möllevången. Tiny businesses — a bakery and a "cheese and cracker" shop — just the right size for mice.

"It's just too darn charming to imagine a world where mice lives parallel to ours but just slightly out of sight," said one representative of the artist group Anonymouse MMX, who wishes to remain

anonymous. (The group has no connection with Anonymouse.org, a site devoted to online privacy.)

They cited the works of Don Bluth, Disney and Astrid Lindgren as "big influences" for the idea. The photos appear to show only two adjacent shops, but the group says they have plans for more.

So what goes into the construction of a store for mice?

"They are built of things that we had laying around and also things we collected, like caps, lids from tin cans, matches, buttons, a lamp shade, Italian stamps etc.," one of the artists said in an email. "The idea was to use things mice themselves could have collected and reused."



Artists in Sweden have constructed a restaurant for rodents. An artist in Sweden has constructed a restaurant for rodents. anonymousemmx

The shops aren't actually open for business, though.

"The nuts are real but the store is closed at the moment, so unless the mice possess some kind of lockpicking talent we doubt they'll get it," an artist said.

But it does sound like the place certainly has some human fans.

"The idea is for them to stick around until someone breaks them, and for them to become an organic part of the

city," the mysterious mouse artist said. "Already people have started to interact with them — someone has baked miniature buns and posters have been added to the scenery."

We can't wait to see what critter-centric establishments crop up next.

As Anonymouse says in their email sign-off, "Cheese out!"

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Tired of abductions, Mexican townsfolk kidnap drug boss' mom

Dec. 13, 2016 Updated Dec. 14, 2016 7:08 a.m.

ocregister.com

MEXICO CITY – In one of the stranger chapters of Mexico's drug war, angry people in a southern town kidnapped the mother of a gang leader to demand the release of their loved ones.

The government of Guerrero state said Tuesday that it was sending about 220 soldiers and police to try to defuse the situation in Totolapan.

The town has been controlled for years by a drug gang boss whose proper name is Raybel Jacobo de Almonte, but who is better known as "El Tequilero."

De Alamonte has lived up to his nickname, which translates roughly as "The Tequila Drinker." In his only known public appearance, he was captured on video drinking with the town's mayor-elect. De Alamonte mumbles inaudibly and has to be held up in a sitting position by one of his henchmen.

In recent months, his gang – also known as the Tequileros – has been fighting turf battles with other gangs in the area. Last week, the Tequileros allegedly kidnapped several inhabitants of Totolapan who they wanted to extort or whom they suspected of supporting a rival.

In response, a few dozen men appeared this week in the streets of Totolapan waving shotguns and hunting rifles. In a video, the men carry banners calling for action against El Tequilero and identify themselves as a "self-defense" force, as vigilantes are known in the region.

"We urgently demand the release of the kidnap victims," a masked man says in a statement read on the video. "We are a legitimate self-defense force of the people."

Among the Tequileros' kidnap victims was a local construction engineer, Isauro de Paz Duque, who was snatched on Sunday by men who had threatened to kill him.

On Monday, a woman who identified herself as De Paz Duque's wife said on a video that townspeople had El Tequilero's mother and would exchange the woman for her husband.

"We have your mother here, Mr. Tequilero," she said. "I propose an exchange: I'll give you your mother if you give me my husband, but I want him safe and sound."

The state government said in a statement that a negotiating team had been sent to establish contact with the family of the missing engineer and the vigilantes and to set up a search team.

"The goal of the team is to ensure that no injury is done to the missing person, nor to the mother of the head of the Tequileros gang, who has apparently been taken by the self-defense forces," the statement said.

The government later confirmed that about five of the two dozen people being held by the vigilantes had been freed, but those freed did not include the gang boss' mother.

In late November, the Guerrero government said El Tequilero was believed to have been wounded and was hiding out with his kidnap victims in the mountains. The state attorney general headed an extensive manhunt using helicopters and troops on the ground in an unsuccessful effort to locate the gang leader.

The area is a hotbed of drug trafficking, killings and extortion. It is the foot of the mountains that produce much of Mexico's opium poppy crop.

Totolapan is considered so dangerous that many outlying hamlets in the township have been abandoned by fearful residents. In 2014, the battered body of the parish priest, the Rev. Ascension Acuna Osorio, was found floating in the Balsas river near the town.

The emergence of vigilante groups, also known as self-styled "community police," has become a headache for Guerrero's government. Authorities say they understand residents' frustration but note the groups often wind up kidnapping suspects, fighting among themselves or preventing police from doing their work.

"The truth is, they are not really community forces, nor are they police," Gov. Hector Astudillo said. "They are armed groups that unfortunately carry out acts ... that generate more violence and confrontation, rather than help."

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Towers of Silence: Zoroastrian Architectures for the Ritual of Death

socksstudio.com

February 9, 2012 by fosco lucarelli 27 Comments

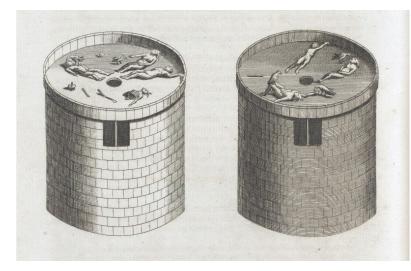
Zoroastrianism traditionally conceives death as a temporary triumph of evil over good: rushing into the body, the corpse demon contaminates everything it comes in contact with.

The flesh of a dead body being so unclean it can pollute everything, a set of rules had to be created in order to dispose of the corpse as safely as possible: as the natural elements of earth, air and water are sacred, the corpses were not to be thrown upon the water or interred. Cremation was also forbidden, as fire is the direct -purest- emanation of the divinity.

Hence a complex ritual was developed, in which the corpses would be eventually exposed to birds of prey and thus devoured, in a final act of charity.

After death every division of class and wealth disappeared, for all deceased would be treated equally.

A proper architectural typology was invented solely for the purpose of burial's ritual: transported in the desert by *nasellars* (traditional zoroastrian pallbearers), the bodies of the deceased were then carted onto sandstone, forbidding hills, to be eventually disposed on cilindrical constructions called **Towers of Silence**.



A **Tower of Silence**, or *Dakhmeh*, is a structure laying on the top of a hill, consisting of concentric slabs surrounding a central pit. The bodies were arranged onto four concentric rings: men, outermost, than women and children. Despite the fact the the birds of prey needed less than an hour to leave nothing but bones, the remains of the dead were left bleaching on the upper circles no less than a year before the nasellars could come and push the skeletons onto the underlying ossuary pit. Running through sand and coal filters, the

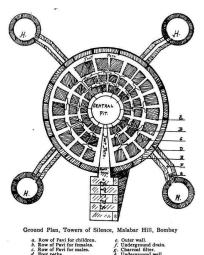
disintegrated bones were eventually washed away in the sea.

A guardian traditionnaly lived near the Tower of Silence, and was the sole person allowed to handle the ceremonial procedures, while relatives of the deceased stayed in a house below, and were forbidden to enter.

Iranian Zoroastrian discontinued this ceremony, and the Dakhmeh were banned in the 70's; conversely, Parsi modern-day Zoroastrians in Mumbai and Karachi still mantains the tradition of burial by exposure, through the use of their own Towers of Silence.

Further read:

Towers of Silence on Wikipedia A Sea of Lead, a Sky of Slate Historical Iranian Sites and People





Please be aware that some of the images at the end of the post are extremely graphic. Viewer discretion is advised.

Comments

1.

guy says

February 12, 2012 at 7:22 am

wonder how they feel knowing when they die









they get eaten by birds....

2.

fosco lucarelli says

February 12, 2012 at 10:05 am

Guy: I guess not that different

from us knowing we're gonna be eaten by worms.

3.

Andy says

February 20, 2012 at 8:35 am

Tibetans Buddhists do the same thing, called Sky Burial.



The line that jumped out at me in this article was " a final act of charity." Giving bodies to the birds, and thus disposing of the dead flesh, is a charity to the birds, and destroying the death-demon that inhabits the corpse. That's just my interpretation, I could be totally wrong here.

But the Tibetan context is completely different – Tibet has little suitable land for burial, and not enough fuel for pyres, so disposal-by-vulture is the most practical option. And in Tibetan Buddhism, once the soul is gone, the body's just an empty

shell. The monks doing the burial often laugh and joke while chopping the body up for easier consumption, because the body's just a piece of rotting meat.

4.

JohnnyG says

June 3, 2012 at 7:22 am

(quote) But the Tibetan context is completely different – (/quote) Maybe not so different-





According to the Tibetan themselves, their native religion Bonism apparently came from a people living west of them known as the "Tazik". This could be the Persian Tajiks.

5.

Mia says

October 28, 2012 at 5:24 pm

The "ritual of death" custom in Tibet and Mongolia are the same like the Zoroastrian custom, called "Sky burial". Tibet has an additional custom – the "Air burial". Many years ago Tibet had also a "water burial" . No Tibetan will eat fish to this day.





One fully has to

Q.S.L.A.S.L.

understand the Zoroastrian Belief to understand and respect their old customs. The last "good deed" for the Zoroastrians is the more than 4000 year old sky burial according to their prayer "good thoughts, good words, good deeds".

6.

cassandra yonder says

December 11, 2012 at 12:54 am

Thank you for sharing this sacred information.

7.

vcell says

February 5, 2013 at 1:52 am

"After death every division of class and wealth disappeared, for all deceased would be treated equally."

Beautiful. After all we all stand before God, and all of our bodies decay.

By the way, for everyone who keeps saying buried bodies are eaten by worms, no. Buried bodies are eaten by beetles, not worms. If a body is exhumed, sometimes the maggots (beetle larva) are visible, which caused the myth that worms were eating them.

8.

Anirudh says

April 10, 2013 at 7:01 pm







thanks.....

i wanted information for my project thankyou so much

9.

Amia Mia (genevian girl) biswas says

May 16, 2013 at 5:31 pm

GOD DIS IS JUST UN TOLERABLE

THE PEOPLE ARE NOT PIECES OF MEAT DAT D BIRDS OF

PREY CAN PREY ON THEY ARE HUMANS

ANYWAYS THANKS AS I NEEDED IT FOR MY PROJECT BUT DUDE ITS JUST AWEFUL STOP IT MAN FOR GODS SAKE

10.

Dhruv Makwana says

June 1, 2013 at 8:18 am

awsm.....imformation..like too much

11.

eshani nandy says

July 14, 2013 at 8:47 am

just what i needed for my project......its fabulous!!!!

12.

RW Maule says

October 12, 2013 at 9:55 pm

Although this was without doubt the original intent, this method of burial is much more ecologically sound than any other. What could be better" A system that is devoid of class or status, that is ecologically sound, that conserves land needed for burials and conserves energy that would be needed for CO2 producing cremation!

13.

ANI says

October 13, 2013 at 2:07 pm

Very horrible.....and useful information......very knowledgeble....

14.

moga says

March 28, 2014 at 8:59 pm

bhenchod kya chutiyagiri hai!

15.



Hattie says

November 12, 2014 at 4:46 pm

I think this is a really beautiful tradition, I'm curious how it developed, Sky burial is a result of their being a lack of land for graves and due to altitude the pace of the decaying body would be too slow and attract vermin... Does this tradition appear out of a similar geographical situation?

16.

Abhipsa Tripathy says

June 30, 2015 at 5:12 pm

IT IS VERY GOODJUST THE THING NEEDED FOR MY PROJECT......ITS AWESOME......;-)

17.

Mount Damavand says

August 29, 2016 at 11:32 am

Thanks for finally talking about >Towers of Silence: Zoroastrian Architectures for the Ritual off Death – SOCKS <Liked it!

Trackbacks

1.

jyuenger » Towers Of Silence says:

February 12, 2012 at 9:23 am

[...] "A Tower of Silence, or Dakhmeh, is a structure laying on the top of a hill, consisting of concentric slabs surrounding a central pit. The bodies were arranged onto four concentric rings: men, outermost, than women and children. Despite the fact the the birds of prey needed less than an hour to leave nothing but bones, the remains of the dead were left bleaching on the upper circles no less than a year before the nasellars could come and push the skeletons onto the underlying ossuary pit. Running through sand and coal filters, the disintegrated bones were eventually washed away in the sea." This. [...]

2.

Zoroastrianism death | Jilleppe says:

May 13, 2012 at 12:18 pm

[...] Towers of Silence: Zoroastrian Architectures for the Ritual of Death ...As for the afterlife, Zoroastrianism teaches that for three days after death the soul remains at the head of its former body. All of the ... [...]

3.

re says:

July 9, 2012 at 7:58 am

[...] through sand and coal filters, the disintegrated bones were eventually washed away in the sea. (via Towers of Silence: Zoroastrian Architectures for the Ritual of Death : socks-studio) (Source: [...]

4.

Mumbai Journal: Cultivating Vultures to Restore a Mumbai Ritual : One Caribbean Radio | The Global Mix says:

November 30, 2012 at 10:30 am

[...] on Malabar Hill, one of Mumbai's most exclusive neighborhoods. Tucked into these acres are three Towers of Silence where Parsis have for centuries disposed of their [...]

5.

Another view: the Tower of Silence « Two Teaspoons says:

December 3, 2012 at 6:24 am

[...] air burials and the towers of [...]

6.

Pogled preko meje | Hapax Legomena says:

December 3, 2012 at 11:03 am

[...] zgodba je o tem, kako Zaratustrijanci v Indiji vzgajajo jastrebe, da bi lahko ponovno vzpostavili stolpe tišine. Gre za pogrebni ritual, pri katerem se mrtve položi na stolp, da njihovo meso požrejo jastrebi, [...]

7.

Mourons en paix : les vautours sont de retour (vidéo) « Etrange et Insolite says: January 13, 2013 at 12:58 pm

[...] il n'y a plus de vautour dans les "tours du silence" : les rapaces ont disparu du ciel de Bombay. Dans les nécropoles parsies, des panneaux [...]

8.

Armchair Travel: The Middle East | Eleventh Stack says:

May 8, 2013 at 11:02 am

[...] the novel chronicles in a series of journal entries. The title–which roughly translates to "towers of silence"–implies that things will not go well for Arash, but, more importantly, for Iran at large [...]

9.

When I am gone, lay me in a Tower of Silence, and let the birds carry me into the sky » Numéro Cinq says:

April 25, 2015 at 6:48 pm

[...] Read the rest at Socks here. [...]

10.

Zoroastrismo – Que religião é essa? | Tabibito Soul says:

October 14, 2015 at 5:46 pm

[...] http://socks-studio.com/2012/02/09/towers-of-silence-zoroastrian-architectures-for-the-ritual-of-dea… [...]



SOCKS is a project by Fosco Lucarelli and Mariabruna Fabrizi of MICROCITIES, Architecture Cityscape, Landscape.

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Treasure hunter found 3 tons of sunken gold and can't leave jail in Ohio until he says where it is

2016-12-15 chicagotribune.com

Tommy G. Thompson was once one of the greatest treasure hunters of his time: A dark-bearded diver who hauled a trove of gold from the Atlantic Ocean in 1988 - dubbed the richest find in U.S. history.

Years later, accused of cheating his investors out of the fortune, Thompson led federal agents on a great manhunt - pursued from a Florida mansion to a mid-rent hotel room booked under a fake name.

Now Thompson's beard has grayed, and he lives in an Ohio jail cell, held there until he gives up the location of the gold.

But for nearly two years, despite threats and fines and the best exertions of a federal judge, no one has managed to make Thompson reveal what he did with the treasure.

The wreck of the S.S. Central America waited 130 years for Thompson to come along. The steamer went down in a hurricane in 1857, taking 425 souls and at least three tons of California gold to the sea floor off South Carolina.

Many tried to find it, but none succeeded until a young, shipwreck-obsessed engineer from Columbus, Ohio, built an underwater robot called "Nemo" to pinpoint the Central America, then dive 8,000 feet under the sea and surface with the loot.

"A man as personable as he was brilliant, Thompson recruited more than 160 investors to fund his expedition," Columbus Monthly noted in a profile. He "spent years studying the ship's fateful voyage . . . and developing the technology to plunge deeper in the ocean than anyone had before to retrieve its treasure."

Thompson's crew pulled up rare 19th-century coins, the ship's bell and "gold bars . . . 15 times bigger than the largest California gold bar previously known to exist," the Chicago Tribune reported in 1989.

And 95 percent of the wreck site was still unexplored - potentially worth \$400 million in gold alone, The Washington Post reported a year later. "The treasure trove is the richest in American history and the deepwater salvage effort the most ambitious ever undertaken anywhere."

The expedition's loot captured the country's attention, as did the peculiarities of its leader - a scientist-seafarer hybrid who worked on nuclear submarine systems before he hunted treasure.

"Thompson is not exactly the romantic, swashbuckling sort," Forbes wrote during the years-long recovery of the ship's treasure. "He is scientific and methodical, with none of the P.T. Barnum that infuses (and inflates) other salvors."

In his late 30s, during the height of his fame, Thompson said little in public and tended to play down his role in the discovery.

"This gold is part of the largest treasure trove in American history," he told reporters in 1989. "But the history of the S.S. Central America is also a rich part of our nation's cultural treasury."

He added: "It's a celebration of American ideals: free enterprise and hard work."

But before long, some of Thompson's bankrollers began painting a very different picture of the man.

Two of the expedition's biggest investors took him to court in the 2000s, accusing him of selling nearly all the gold and keeping the profits to himself.

When a federal judge ordered Thompson to appear in 2012, he didn't show. An arrest warrant was issued, but the man who found a long-lost shipwreck had disappeared.

There followed a two-year manhunt for what a top U.S. Marshal called "perhaps one of the smartest fugitives" the agency had ever chased.

Thompson had "almost limitless resources and approximately a 10-year head start" in the chase, Peter Tobin, U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio, said in a statement.

Thompson and his girlfriend had been living for years in a Florida mansion, paying rent with cash that was damp and moldy from the earth it had been buried in, the Washington Post reported last year. The couple had fled by the time authorities found the house.

Government records detailed what they'd left behind: disposable cellphones, money straps stamped "\$10,000," and a guide on evading law enforcement, titled "How to be Invisible."

Thompson was finally caught in January 2015, after agents tracked his girlfriend to a \$200-a-night hotel near West Palm Beach, the Post reported at the time.

In a celebratory statement, Tobin said the U.S. Marshals had used "all of our resources and ingenuity" to find the treasure hunter.

But they didn't find the treasure.

Thompson's investors, who originally expected to make tens of millions of dollars from the venture, believe he had hundreds of gold coins secreted in a trust account for his children. At first, their search for the coins looked promising. Thompson pleaded guilty to contempt of court in April 2015, according to the Columbus Dispatch. He said the coins were in Belize and agreed to reveal their exact location.

But that didn't happen.

Thompson's attorney said last month that his client couldn't remember who he gave the gold to, even after poring over thousands of pages of documents related to the treasure, according to the Dispatch.

A federal judge ruled that Thompson was faking memory problems, the newspaper reported, and has held him in an Ohio jail cell for a year.

Thompson could remain behind bars until he talks, The Associated Press reported, and is being fined \$1,000 a day in the meantime.

"Who knows - he might have an epiphany," U.S. District Judge Algenon Marbley remarked on Monday, when he ordered Thompson to answer questions about the gold's location.

But so far, the S.S. Central America's treasure remains missing for the second time in two centuries.

And perhaps the only man able to find it remains as silent as the lost sailors of that old wreck.



Muslim woman fabricated report of Trump supporters threatening her on NYC subway: police



Analysis:
Five weeks
before
becoming
president,
Donald
Trump once
again is
spreading
falsehood



Trump calls
on
Pennsylvania
crowd to
cheer
AfricanAmericans
who 'didn't
come out to
vote'

Dawn had barely broken Thursday when Donald Trump once again broadcast via Twitter a provably false claim: that the Obama administration had not raised an alarm about Pennsylvania Russian interference in the presidential election until after Hillary Clinton's defeat.

In fact, on Oct. 7, the administration issued an official statement accusing the Russians of being behind the cyberattacks that appear to have harmed Clinton's campaign.

Chicago Tribune

Football Stories & Stats





Cathleen Decker

Read Full Article

Donald Trump's barnstorming tour across the states that won him the White House continues to feature far more taunts of triumph than notes of healing after a bruising election.

Thursday's rally in Hershey, Pennsylvania, found the president-elect calling for the mostly white crowd to cheer for African-Americans who were "smart" to heed his message and therefore "didn't come out to vote" for his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton.

"That was the big thing, so thank you to the African-American community," Trump said.

Read Full Article

Two of three people killed early Thursday in a crash in south suburban Posen have been identified as Chicago women, officials said.

Jaquira L. Brown, 26, was of the 6400 block of South Wood Street in the city's Englewood neighborhood and Lanae Dinnett Riley, 22, was of the 1800 block of South Paulina Street in the Heart of Chicago neighborhood, according to the Cook County medical examiner's office.

The identity of the third victim has not been made public yet.

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The Tribune reporter walked into an Evanston CVS pharmacy carrying two prescriptions: one for a common antibiotic, the other for a popular anti-cholesterol drug.

Taken alone, these two drugs, clarithromycin and simvastatin, are relatively safe. But taken together they can cause a severe breakdown in muscle tissue and lead to kidney failure and death.

When the reporter tried to fill the prescriptions, the pharmacist should have warned him of the dangers. But that's not what happened.

Read Full Article

Trump's strategy helped gather in supporters but five weeks before becoming president also poses the threat of further alienating those who did not side with him.

Read Full Article

Cathleen

I was genuinely saddened to recently read that some financial experts believe Sears — a true icon in American retailing — is in real danger of going out of business.

I grew up in New England in abject poverty, with an older brother and a younger sister. By the time I was 17, we had — because of the massive dysfunction of our severely alcoholic parents — been evicted from 34 homes, many times ending up homeless.

Read Full Article

The entire Minnesota football team says it is boycotting all football activities until it gets satisfactory answers from the university about the suspension of 10 players this week.

The school suspended the players after an internal investigation into a sexual assault case. Police declined to charge any of the players, but the school suspended them based on internal regulations involving sexual assault allegations.

The team's players said Wednesday that have not ruled out skipping the Holiday Bowl on Dec. 27 against Washington State in San Diego.

Read Full Article

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Turkeys cause power outages in Oregon town

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 9, 2016

 P_{res} MEDFORD, Ore. (AP) — A flock of wild turkeys, long considered menaces to one Oregon town, have sparked new ire after causing power outages in the eastern part of Medford.

The Mail Tribune reports (https://is.gd/KjJYj6) that wild turkeys flying into Pacific Power Lines have been responsible for four morning outages in the last month, each time cutting off power for more than 1.600 residents and businesses.

Pacific Power spokesman Monte Mendenhall says the outages are definitely caused by the turkeys, though it's unclear how the utility will resolve the issue.

Unlike in rural areas, it is illegal to shoot or hunt within Medford's city limits. And trapping turkeys is thought to be difficult and time consuming.

State wildlife biologists say the power outages are a new symptom of the old problem of people feeding turkeys, allowing them to establish urban flocks.

Information from: Mail Tribune, http://www.mailtribune.com/

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Two American dinosaurs go hunting for Nessie



ALISTAIR MUNRO

15:4516:18Wednesday 07 December 2016

TOP Scottish visitor attractions have been given a major boost after a visit from two Tyrannosaurus Rex from across the Atlantic.

Global social media duo Trex Tuesdays have been brought to the UK to explore Scotland, Wales and London to share their experiences with their thousands of online fans.

Trex Tuesdays dress up as dinosaurs and film

their attempts at human tasks. While in Scotland they went hunting for Nessie on Loch Ness and travelled to some of the country's top attractions.

They visited Dochfour House, Aldourie Castle, Urquhart Castle, Tomatin Distillery, Inverness Golf Club, Chisholm's Highland Dress, Steve the Nessie Hunter at Dores Beach, Inverness Castle and Spud the Piper.

Elsewhere in the UK they were also spotted taking a selfie in front of Big Ben and recreating the Beatles' Abbey Road crossing.



TrexTuesdays at Loch Ness. Picture: VisitBritain

fantastic time for Trex Tuesdays to visit.

The initiative was the brainchild of VisitBritain.

Malcolm Roughead, chief executive of VisitScotland, said: "It's wonderful to see Trex Tuesdays giving their followers a taste of Scotland and meeting our very own prehistoric Nessie.

"However, with its awe-inspiring scenery and rich history and heritage, you don't have to be a dinosaur to enjoy the Scottish Highlands.

VisitBritain marketing director Robin Johnson added: "Make no bones about it, it's a

"Britain is not only offering great value but also a feast of amazing experiences that T-Rex can only get here - from walking in the steps of their ancestors on the Jurassic Coast and chewing the fat with Nessie in Scotland, to dropping in on recently discovered cousins in the Vale of Glamorgan in Wales.



Trex Tuesdays at Inverness Golf Club. Picture: VisitBritain

"We're thrilled they are sharing their #OMGB (Oh My GREAT Britain) amazing moments on social media with their thousands of fans and inspiring more people to book a trip to the UK."

Trex Tuesdays said: "Britain has such great history and since we are 65 million years old, we really appreciate that! Our trip was many experiences in one; we loved the bustle and pomp of London, explored the lochs and hills of Scotland, and climbed castles and played rugby in Wales. It was more than a vacation, it was an adventure."

Trex Tuesdays' videos are released every Tuesday on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram and have gained millions of views online. This week's video focuses on their time in London, while the following two videos, which will be released on the next two Tuesdays, will show the dinosaurs exploring Scotland and Wales.



TrexTuesdays at Chisholms Kiltmakers in Inverness. Picture: VisitBritain

Social media is at the heart of VisitBritain's domestic and international #OMGB 'Home of Amazing Moments' campaigns which showcase the incredible experiences that can only be had on a trip in Britain.

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Obese corpse falls off stretcher and crushes undertaker's legs

By Janine Rasiah 10:53, 11 DEC 2016 Updated 10:53, 11 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Rise in obesity is making undertakers' jobs much harder - and in some cases bigger bodies are resulting in serious injuries or a real-life one foot in the grave

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An undertaker was left with serious leg injuries after an obese corpse rolled off a stretcher and pinned him to the floor.

The unfortunate funeral worker is one of many who have been injured while struggling to maneuver increasingly super-sized corpses.

One undertaker strained their back so badly while lowering a heavy coffin into a grave that they needed to take a week off and another broke a leg after tripping while carrying a body.

Suffering aches, sprains and even broken bones is becoming more commonplace in the funeral sector as obesity figures rise.

In another case emergency services had to rescue an employee who strained their back as they struggled to move a body from the place where the person had died - despite being assisted by a colleague.

Obesity-linked injuries were among 204 serious work-related accidents in the funeral sector reported to the Health and Safety Executive last year, reports the Daily Star.

Cranes are increasingly being used to lower ever bigger coffins into the ground.

One funeral worker broke their toe when a coffin fell on their foot and a lay minister at one service broke her leg and hip after falling over in front of the coffin.

Though she was unable to move, she asked for proceedings to continue while she waited for paramedics to arrive.

Another casualties include a cemetery assistant who injured his leg after accidently pushing a wobbly headstone onto himself and a bearer who hurt their back by tumbling into a grave following a misstep.

One worker hurt his arm, hand and shoulder as he and a colleague dropped a particularly heavy body while walking down a steep, spiral staircase.

But it's not just funeral workers who are risk of putting one foot in the grave - literally.

A member of the public had their wrist broken after being hit by a reversing hearse.

And one heavy coffin required EIGHT people to carry it, with one of the pallbearers suffering a severe shoulder injury as four had to move aside while approaching the narrow church entrance.

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UPS trials delivery by e-bike in (where else?) Portland

Derek Markham (@derekmarkham) Transportation / Bikes December 7, 2016

treehugger.com



Big Brown is now delivering some of its packages in Portland, Oregon, with a prototype electric-assist tricycle, with plans to deploy additional e-bike deliveries next year if successful.

Much of the time, when covering electric mobility topics such as e-bikes and electric cars, we tend to focus on the personal use of them, but there's also a huge opportunity for cleaning up transportation in a decidedly less sexy part of the sector, which is the local delivery and services market. I mean, riding

an e-bike or driving an electric vehicle is probably always going to be much more exciting than watching a business-owned electric vehicle make a clean quiet delivery.

However, considering the sheer volume of delivery and service vehicles that are being driven in constant stop-and-go patterns throughout our cities each day, perhaps it's time we started cheering on those companies that are looking to low-carbon transportation solutions for their own operations, such as this pilot program from UPS.

According to UPS, the company deployed its first e-bike for deliveries in the US on November 21st, in Portland, Oregon. The city was said to be "a logical choice" for the initial e-bike delivery program, as the company is already using conventional bicycles for delivery there on a seasonal basis.

"The eBike is equipped with battery-powered electric motors that makes it possible to cover further distances, carry substantial loads, and navigate hills and other terrain. Maximum energy efficiency is achieved when combining battery power and human power simultaneously. The eBike can be operated solely on battery power or pedal power. During the testing phase, UPS will evaluate the reliability, design, integration to the city's infrastructure and acceptance of the vehicle." - UPS

The UPS delivery e-bike is nothing like your average electric commuter bike, as it's a cargo tricycle capable of carrying a large volume of packages in an enclosed hauling platform, and includes a windshield and covered area for the driver. The e-bike is said to have been designed and built by Portland's own Truck Trikes, which builds what it calls "true industrial trikes" capable of hauling payloads up to 600 pounds.

"Early in our 109 year history, UPS operated as a bike messenger company. While we have evolved and developed a vast network of ground and air vehicles, the bicycle may be making a comeback as we navigate through crowded urban areas and continue our focus on environmental sustainability." - Mark Wallace, UPS senior VP of global engineering and sustainability

Although this e-bike pilot program from UPS consists of just one electric delivery bike at the moment, it's quite possible that it could lead to a more comprehensive roll-out of cleaner local delivery options by the company. And if Big Brown can make it work, more companies may be prone to follow.

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Venezuela ditches its largest bill causing hour queues

04:44 EST, 12 December 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Amid Venezuela's plunging economy, the South American country is scrapping its largest bank note, causing people to queue for hours to withdraw bundles of cash.

Thousands of citizens rushed to cash machines after President Nicolas Maduro announced on Sunday that citizens had only ten days to exchange their 100-bolivar bills.

Maduro said the 100-bolivar bill, equal to US two cents and virtually worthless in GBP, would be taken out of circulation on Wednesday.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced on Sunday that the 100-bolivar bill would be demonetized on Wednesday. Citizens flocked to cash machines and queued for hours to withdraw money

The bill was the largest bank note in the country, and more than six billion 100-bolivar bills in circulation and made up 48 per cent of all bills and coins.

President Maduro said in an hours-long speech that the change was to due to the need to combat contraband of the bills at the volatile Colombia-Venezuela border.

The government will release six new notes and three new coins, the largest of which will be worth 20,000 bolivars, less than \$5 or nearly £4.

The country's out-of-control inflation has made purchasing simple goods a large issue.

Paying a restaurant or supermarket bill without a debit or credit card can often require a backpack full of cash.

Clarisa Matson de Garcia, from Caracas, Venezuela, said she stockpiles loads of cash to make a simple purchase.

The 79-year-old said to Fox News Latino: 'I have to put them in the suitcase, because they don't fit in my wallet. And then I pray that nobody robs me in the street.'

President Maduro previously has said that organized crime networks at the Colombia-Venezuela border buy up Venezuelan notes to in turn buy subsidized Venezuelan goods and sell them for vast profits in Colombia.

Maduro said the change was to due to the need to combat contraband of the bills at the volatile Colombia-Venezuela border

While smuggling of this sort is an issue at the border, it cannot account for nationwide shortages of the most basic goods from food to medicine, which have left millions hungry and doctors crying out for help.

'I have decided to take out of circulation bills of 100 bolivars in the next 72 hours,' Maduro said. 'We must keep beating the mafias.'

However, getting cash in recent months has proven difficult, and the country's credit-card machines have recently suffered problems, leaving many businesses asking customers to pay by bank transfer.

Strict currency controls introduced in 2003 that pegged the bolivar to the dollar, coupled with heavy reliance on oil, are seen as the root of the crisis by most economists. Maduro has blamed an 'economic war' being waged against his government by the opposition and the United States.

The country's out-of-control inflation has made purchasing simple goods a large issue. Paying a restaurant or supermarket bill without a debit or credit card can often require a backpack full of cash

According to Fox News, only around 35 per cent of the population does not have a bank account and the announcement made citizens rush to banks.

Money supply, the sum of cash and checking deposits as well as savings and other 'near money' deposits, was up a staggering 19 percent in the three weeks to December 2 and the curve has been exponential since Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez came to power in 1999.

The sudden demonetization comes on the heels of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi announcement that all 500 and 1,000 rupee notes would no longer be accepted.

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Victorian Slang of the Week - Funking the Cobbler - The Skittish Library

skittishlibrary.co.uk



by Estelle · November 11, 2014

Funking the cobbler – a kid's trick involving the pungent spice asafoetida, also known as Devil's Dung (nice). The spice was stuffed with cotton into a cow's horn (everyone had a cow's horn to hand in the nineteenth century), set alight, and the smoke blown through a keyhole or into the aforementioned cobbler's stall.

In short, it's an early kind of stinkbomb, perenially popular with schoolboys. I feel safe in this gender assumption having sat on a fair number of buses that have fallen victim to a gang of lads chucking a stinkbomb on just before the doors close, while we poor saps sit there choking for the rest of the journey. This is especially great if you're pregnant and your sense of smell has basically become a superpower.

Grrrr! *shakes fist in the manner of an annoyed cobbler*

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Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.ukSaturday 10 Dec 2016 2:41 pm



Entire village shows up for Christmas tree lights switch on - council forgets to deliver

Crowds gathered at Christmas tree light switch-on only for council to forget to switch them on (Picture: Belfast Telegraph)

An entire village gathered for a Christmas tree lights switchon event were left unimpressed after council officials forgot to deliver the lights.

Locals were left scratching their hands after discovering the large Christmas tree in Co Armagh, Belfast, was completely bare.

Apparently, council officials had forgotten to deliver the lights and so the organisers had no choice but to abandon the entire event.



Luckily, the lights were delivered the next day and the big switch-on went ahead (Picture: Facebook/Aine Mac)

The event, promoted as the 'Scotch Street Christmas Tree' event, was set to see Lord Mayor Garath Keating join children from Richmount Playgroup and Richmount Primary School to switch the lights on.

Though the evening went ahead with Christmas carols sang by the primary school's choir, the main event was the big-switch on.

Don Woolsey, owner of Woolsey Mace, one of the sponsors of the event, told Belfast Telegraph: 'Everyone was a bit surprised and a bit disappointed, as it was the main event. There were loads of children there, it was all for them. It was sad for them.'

Apologising for the embarrassing blunder, Mr Garvey, chairman of organisers Richmount Rural Community Association, wrote on Facebook the next day:

Council staff apologise for the lights not being on the Christmas tree last night. We have no wish to cause trouble for these staff. It is supposed to be the season of goodwill.

I would be grateful if people would let the matter rest. We all have made mistakes and sometimes forget to do things.'

But a council spokeswoman reportedly claimed there was no formal request for the lights, telling the paper: 'In this instance, our operations department was not given adequate notice for the lights to be installed and tested prior to the switch-on.'

Fortunately, lights have now arrived in the village and the tree is no longer bare.

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Illinois man mods child's Power Wheels car to reach 40 mph

upi.com



By Ben Hooper | Dec. 8, 2016 at 4:36 PM Follow @oddnewsupi



An Illinois man modified a Power Wheels toy car to reach speeds of 40 mph. Screenshot: Storyful

MCHENRY, III., Dec. 8 (UPI) -- An amateur mechanic in Illinois modified a child's Power Wheels toy car to run on a real engine and reach speeds of 40 mph.

Kyle Kuta shared a video showing how he took a Power Wheels vehicle based on the Cadillac

Escalade and replaced the 12-volt electric engine with a 5 horsepower 160cc Honda engine.

The video shows Kuta take his souped-up toy car for a test drive, reaching speeds of 40 mph.

"This is what you get when you cram a 5 horsepower 160cc Honda engine into a plastic Escalade made for a kid: an unstable 40 MPH death trap. The frame is made out of Unistrut, the wheels were meant for a wheel barrel, and the rest of it is just junk we had laying around the garage," he wrote.

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Alligator sprints across fairway at Florida golf course, belly flops into water hazard

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Dec. 8, 2016 at 1:42 PM



A sprightly alligator sprints across the fairway at a Florida golf course. Screenshot: Linda Jameson/Facebook

ENGLEWOOD, Fla., Dec. 8 (UPI) -- A visitor to a Florida golf course captured video of a fleet-footed alligator sprinting across the fairway and doing a belly flop into a water hazard.

Linda Jameson posted a video to Facebook showing the alligator she encountered Dec. 1 on the fairway of a hole at Myakka Pines Golf

Club in Englewood.

The video shows Jameson's golfing partner, Mike, looking on stunned as the gator saunters across the fairway.

The reptile breaks into a sudden sprint and barrels toward the water hazard, where it belly-flops into the water.

"Whoa! Look how fast he went!" Jameson says.

Alligator sightings are not unusual at the golf course, but the gator's unusual speed drew attention to Jameson's video.

"Gators CAN move fast!" the golf club said on Facebook.

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What the Pizzagate conspiracy theory borrows from a bogus satanic sex panic of the 1980s

By Roger Lancaster December 8

washingtonpost.com

The Washington post Americans are more paranoid and easily misled than ever. And that's dangerous.

Roger Lancaster is professor of anthropology and cultural studies at George Mason University, and the author of "Sex Panic and the Punitive State."

Real consequences of fake news leveled on a D.C. pizzeria and other nearby restaurants

Responding to incendiary, unfounded online rumors from paranoid corners of the Internet that Washington pizzeria Comet Ping Pong was the center of a child sex-trafficking ring led by Hillary Clinton and her confidants, Edgar Welch drove six hours from North Carolina to the city to investigate. After allegedly firing a rifle into the floor of the restaurant in pursuit of evidence of these nonexistent crimes, Welch was arrested and faces four felony charges, including felony assault with a deadly weapon.

The restaurant's owner and employees had been subjected to escalating harassment and threats over several weeks leading up to this event. Nearby restaurants — said by online conspiracy theorists to be linked by underground tunnels to Comet Ping Pong — were also dragged into social media attacks and were harassed and threatened by anonymous callers. The tunnels, of course, do not exist. And there is no child sex-trafficking ring run by Clinton campaign officials out of a pizza parlor. The entire scenario is a fantasy dreamed up by feverish minds. And it is not the first time.

Pizzagate traveled from one platform to another along the ultrarapid circuits of social media. But if there is something striking about the *speed* with which the story spread, there is nothing new about its essential *form*.

Pizzagate shares much of its content with an outbreak of collective hysteria over imaginary occult pedophile rings three decades ago, which can now summed up in three words: satanic-ritual abuse. At the beginning of the 1980s, it seemed eminently plausible to many people that an extensive underground network of sadistic devil worshipers was sexually torturing large numbers of children in preschools and day-care centers across the country — and that these activities had somehow gone undetected for years, if not decades.

Accusations erupted in Kern County, Calif., (in 1982) spread to McMartin Preschool in a Los Angeles suburb (1983) and then quickly went national. Hundreds (mostly day-care workers) were falsely accused. More than 70 people were convicted and later exonerated on horrific criminal charges. As late as 1997, near the end of a long wave of panics, four Texas lesbians were convicted in San Antonio. Released from prison in 2012 and 2013, they were exonerated only this year.

Satanic-ritual abuse has been thoroughly debunked by Debbie Nathan and Mike Snedeker, whose "Satan's Silence" remains the best book on the subject. But the psychodrama of the satanic-ritual-abuse panic can help us understand — and challenge — the strange, fevered imaginings that now assert themselves again.

First, the panics of the 1980s were fanned by flawed psychological models ("repressed memories") and professional malpractice (suggestive interviewing techniques). Cadres of social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists were involved in the production of the witch hunt. Pizzagate has no such professional support, but it did draw on institutional support to produce its mythology: a farflung network of right-wing websites and alt-right social media networks. In those networks, it would appear that no scenario that incriminated liberal Democrats was sufficiently outlandish to draw normal incredulity. Inventive readings of campaign chair John Podesta's emails were sufficient to count as evidence of, among other things, "spirit cooking" and other ritual and satanic forms of abuse.

Second, in both cases, social movements were involved in the weaponization of suspicion, although the political center of gravity has shifted from one episode to the next. In the late 1970s, social workers and feminist activists had focused on combating child sexual abuse; they sometimes developed extremely broad definitions of abuse or floated exaggerated estimates of its occurrence in this quest. Such efforts have left deep cultural residues, and these include the acceptance of exaggerated claims about the number of child trafficking victims, and the incidence and forms of organized child sexual abuse. Pizzagate relies on these inflated fears to seem plausible, and it similarly relies on a viewpoint marked by extreme suspicion (of the media, Washington "elites," politicians and the Clinton camp specifically) to decode ordinary events and statements into extraordinary claims.

Third, both episodes were *media* phenomena. In the 1980s, mainstream print and broadcast media uncritically purveyed stories about ritual abuse as news. Today, by contrast, most mainstream reportage about Pizzagate comes with taglines such as "unsubstantiated," "no evidence," or even "false" — but to little avail. Because Pizzagate was born and propagated inside right-wing networks online and on the airwaves that explicitly reject mainstream media sources as corrupt and complicit, the mainstream media's refutations serve only to convince conspiracy theorists that they are onto an even bigger conspiracy. In other words, as long as the media continue to deny the phenomenon, the alternative media outlets of the conspirators will continue to feverishly push the theory in tweets, talk radio and Web forums.

Fake news stories are dangerous, as anyone can see — and not only for the pernicious effects they have on public opinion. Fabrications about the plotting of secretive evildoers have an inciting effect and have often been linked to outbursts of violence. Witch hunts, pogroms, lynchings and other forms of communal violence invariably start in fakery and rumor.

We have good reason to think that the role of fakery is expanding in the public sphere. Part of this expansion has to do with the speeding-up of communication, its dissemination through networks that lack protocols or fact-checking. This is part of the long story of modernity. Fear and confusion propagate faster through radio and television than by way of mass-produced broadsides or fliers; the Internet is a more efficient means of converting anecdote into evidence and rumor into "fact" than was the Hearst newspaper chain of yesteryear.

Part of this also has to do with the toxic stew of Trump's campaign rhetoric, which intensified what historian Richard Hofstadter dubbed a "paranoid style" of American politics. Almost everything about the Trump campaign involved assertions of secrecy, conspiracy and corruption on the part of his opponents, but he won nonetheless. These are dangerous times. As Americans become more accustomed to the paranoid style of politics and find themselves encouraged by their leaders to

seek out secret, shadowy meanings in everything, frustration and animosity will continue to feed unsubstantiated panics, and the specter of real violence for imagined wrongs will draw nearer.

Roger Lancaster is professor of anthropology and cultural studies at George Mason University, and the author of "Sex Panic and the Punitive State." Follow @RogerLancaster

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What's Bundespraesidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung?

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressDecember 9, 2016

 P_{res} VIENNA (AP) — For all those who don't speak German — and indeed for those who do — here is Austria's word of the year, adding to the challenges of reading and speaking the language.

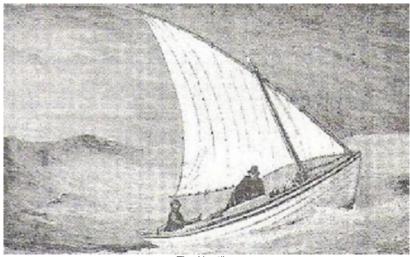
It's "Bundespraesidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung," or "postponement of the repeat of the runoff of the presidential election."

The tongue-twister was born of the record time it took to elect Austria's president, and was announced following a poll of 10,000 people carried out by the Research Unit for Austrian German at the University of Graz, in cooperation with the Austria Press Agency.

A first round in April was followed by a May runoff between the two most popular candidates. This was annulled because of irregularities. A new date set for October was then postponed because of faulty absentee ballots to Dec. 4, when the vote was won by Alexander Van der Bellen.

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26 Saturday Nov 2016



The Nautilus.

A modern ocean liner can cross the Atlantic Ocean from a Western European port to New York in a week, and while maximum speed of current naval warships is classified for obvious reasons, travel in excess of forty knots seems fairly common (which cuts the time for transatlantic travel down to 3.8 days). We move fast. One wonders what consequences this has for our attention as the natural world whips past us at breakneck speeds. Back in prehistory you needed to pay close attention to your immediate surroundings should you wish to avoid being eaten, beaten, or caught in a landslide, but then we learned to sharpen pointy sticks, harness fire, build roads, and raise walls, and vigilant situational awareness

tended to be reserved for which cultural taboos you might be violating or whether the cops were nearby. Monsters started fading into the landscape, a casualty of acceleration, caught only out of the corner of our eye in the lamplight of a deserted street or a pocket of virgin timberland.

In fact, the world has sped up around us so much in the past 100 years, it's a wonder we notice anything at all, with our noses buried in our mobile technology, global positioning to tell us where to go, and the simple fact that a long distance airline passenger can effectively travel 12,000 miles in a day if they were so inclined. Accelerating technological change always manifests first in the arenas of communication and transport, and I'm suspicious this is because they are essentials in effectively organizing to oppress each other, but what do we miss in our race to, well, race?

We've always had folks who like to challenge themselves to do things the old-fashioned way, brave the wilds without the aid of GPS or cross vast distances with the rudimentary technology of their forefathers. Sometimes these intrepid fellows simply vanish, and we shrug our shoulders, figuring that's the price they paid for avoiding modern conveniences, and sometimes we marvel at their successes almost as much as their audacity. It takes a mighty sailing man, a skipper brave and true to turn his eyes to the horizon and figure ancient man wasn't all that special and if they could cross oceans with little more than moxy and a glorified sailboat, well darn it, we should be able to as well. It should be unsurprising that such adventurers also occasionally encounter monsters, make a note of it, and get on with the business of being comparatively awesome like it's no big deal.

In the 1800's, steam power was already on the rise, and ships such as the full-rigged sailing ship *Savannah*, using wind and a steam driven paddle wheel managed an Atlantic crossing in roughly 29 days in 1819. This is of course one of the main reason sea monsters became less of a problem. Riding high above the waterline, moving fast and loud, we just don't get as many opportunities to spot the odd kraken. Maybe we're just too busy with the free drinks, shuffleboard, or hunting enemy submarines to overly concern ourselves with monsters of the deep. But maybe, just maybe, when we stick our noses down there in the brine, we increase our odds of spotting an elusive creature.

In 1878, William Albert Andrews and his brother Asa Walter Andrews of Beverley, Massachusetts stared out at the vastness of the sea and decided to engage in a little bit of one-upsmanship. In 1877, Thomas Crapo and his wife Joanna departed New Bedford, Massachusetts in their 19 foot, 7 inch ketch-rigged dory and arrived in Penzance, England 49 days later. The Andrews brothers figured they could top that. They commissioned the building of a 19 foot lapstrake dory (only 15 feet from stem to sternpost) which they named the *Nautilus* and intended to use it to beat the record of the Crapos. Total depth amidships was just 2 feet 3 inches. That's pretty darn close to the water. And just because they were busy showing how tough they were, they didn't even include buoyancy tanks (not that they had room), instead relying on their own skill at bailing and pumping water out when things got rough. They sailed from Boston Harbor on June 7th, 1878 bound for Paris, France.

The Andrews had a bit of a false start, damaging their sole navigation lantern and losing their binnacle lamp cover on the first night. I haven't a clue what these are, but I don't imagine you want to be sailing the Atlantic in a tiny boat without them, so they stopped in Beverley, Massachusetts for repairs, setting sail once again on June 11th. They had themselves quite an adventure. William was hit on the head with the boom (he survived), they nearly wrecked off Sable Island, Nova Scotia, faced rough seas, bad weather, lack of sun (which they needed to get a fix on their position – they occasionally asked passing ships), and gale force winds. At about the halfway point, Walter started coughing up blood, but they persevered, landing in Mullion Cove, Cornwall on 31st July, 1878, after which it was just a hop, skip, and a jump to Le Havre, France where they were enthusiastically greeted.

Oh wait. Did I mention they encountered a sea monster? Captain William Andrews (Walter died soon after they returned to America) turned their voyage log into a popular book modestly entitled *A Daring Voyage Across the Atlantic Ocean*, and buried amongst the biographical details and descriptions of just what it takes to cross an ocean in a 19 foot boat, he casually mentions that on Wednesday, July 17th, they sighted a fearsome monster of the deep.

Just thirty-four days out. I never took much stock about sea serpents, but I have good reason to believe, after what I saw last evening, before dark, that there are denizens of the deep that have never been thoroughly explained or illustrated by our zoological societies. It was during a moment of intense calm, and I had been watching some whales sporting and spouting at a short distance behind me, when, on turning and looking in the opposite direction, I was startled to see what appeared to be a part of a huge monster in the shape of a snake; it was about two hundred feet off. I saw twelve or fifteen feet of what appeared to be the tail of a huge black snake from five to fifteen inches in diameter, the end being stubby, or round, and white. It was in the air in a corrugated shape in motion, and in the act of descending. I also saw a dark shadowy form in the water corresponding with the tail; also the wake on the water as if more had just gone down, the whole being in motion after the manner of a snake; also heard the noise of the descending part, and saw the splash on the water. Walter being just at that moment at the cuddy, where I keep the hatchet, getting some tea for supper, I told him to pass me the hatchet quick, which he did. He heard the splash and saw the form in the water. I wanted the hatchet, not because I thought I should have to use it, but because I thought it would be a good thing to have it handy, in case I should want to use it. Walter had a swim an hour before near the boat, and the thought of sea serpents being around kind of took away his relish for that kind of sport for the present. During the night we heard from time to time the most horrid noises behind us that we have ever heard on the water—splashing and breathing in a loud wheezy manner (Andrews, 1880, p99-101).

This seems to be a testament to the quality and character of these two salty mariners. In between cups of tea in a 19 foot boat, alone in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and faced with a sea monster loitering nearby, they calmly pass the hatchet and carry on. After all, what else are you going to do? The things you see when you're moving low and slow, right? We like to think that the monsters of the world receded along with our superstitions, when it seems that in fact we simply learned to outrun them, and they lurk just beneath when we take the time to stick our heads closer to the water. Our technological savvy has led to our mastery of our environment (for better or worse), but we make a mistake when we assume our mere tools invalidate, rather than simply outpace our monsters, or as John Locke observed, "It is of great use to the sailor to know the length of his line, though he cannot with it fathom all the depths of the ocean".

References

Andrews, William Albert, 1843-. A Daring Voyage Across the Atlantic Ocean: by Two Americans, the Brothers Andrews: The Log of the Voyage. London: Griffith & Farran, 1880.

thoughts on "Wooden Ships, Iron Men, and Occasional Sea Serpents"

1. busterggi*said:*

November 27, 2016 at 8:53 am

Don't know of any snake that swims that way nor does a five diameter sound particularly monstrous. And what does corrugated mean in this case?

Not a clue as to what they saw.

floodmousesaid:

December 4, 2016 at 2:26 pm

If it was a tentacle 5-15" in diameter, I would hate to see up close, what the tentacle might have been attached to.

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Letterbox mix up confused demolition workers

08/12/2016 news.com.au



The baffling demolition of a suburban house that's left neighbours and police scratching their heads. Courtesy: A Current Affair

IF YOU think your morning has got off to a bad start spare a thought for the man whose house was demolished by mistake.

The crew from Daniel's Demolitions turned up to a house in Bankstown and began tearing the property down.

They thought they were knocking down the right house, but a mix-up over numbers on letterboxes led to the mistake.

The workers needed to demolish 200 Marion Street, but because the house next door (number 198) had a letterbox with number 200 on it, the wrong house was knocked down.

Steve Ballas owns 198 Marion Street, but because of the wrong letterbox always thought he lived at 200.

He came home to see his house being knocked down.



This is all that is left standing of Steve Ballas's property. Picture: A Current Affair/9



Current Affair/9

The property before it was demolished by accident. Picture: A Current Affair/9Source:Channel 9

The local council confirmed Mr Ballas does not actually own 200 Marion Street — he owns 198.

Canterbury Bankstown Council confirmed his notices had 198 Marion Street printed on them. The council also said his house was in the right place between number 200 and 196.

The Bankstown businessman arrived at the property yesterday halfway through the demolition and told A The property before it was demolished by accident. Picture: A Current Affairit was all done without his approval.

"All I know is I thought I owned 200 Marion Street, Bankstown, and it was a little house I was going to rent. But obviously I don't have that house anymore," Mr Ballas said.

Mr Ballas, who has owned the property for a number of years, was preparing his house for rent and raced down to the property when he heard the construction work was taking place.

He told *The Torch* the demolition was a simple mistake.



The house which was supposed to be demolished but is still He said he received instructions via email to standing. Picture: A Current Affair/9

The house which was supposed to be demolished but is still standing. Picture: A Current Affair/9Source:Channel 9

"What can I do? The only ones to win out of this are the solicitors." he said.

The owner of the demolition company, who only gave his name as Daniel, said he felt "sick" and "gutted" over the mistake and assumed they were at the correct address after checking the letterbox number.

demolish 200 Marion Street and never met his

client.

The council had approved the demolition plans for the real 200 — the house next door to Mr Ballas' flattened property.

Police said there were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the demolition which is now the subject of a WorkCover investigation.

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THE **SPIRITS** BUSINESS

8th December, 2016 by Kristiane Sherry

British hospitality group Young's

Pubs and Geronimo Inns has revealed the most bizarre items left behind during last year's Christmas party season – including a prosthetic leg and a stuffed otter.



stuffed-otter-web

The survey from more than 170 venues found the everyday bank cards, mobile phones and keys were the most often forgotten post-Christmas party, but some more surprising items also made the list.

Among the more curious leftovers discovered by pub staff were a pair of fluffy pink handcuffs, Christmas themed underwear, a set of false teeth and a large sex toy.

Staff at the Hollywood Arms in Chelsea

even discovered a pet dog inadvertently left behind by a regular.

"We see this dog in the pub fairly often, he's always by his owner's side," said Giovanni Pilla, pub manager at the Hollywood Arms.

"While the owner was indulging in one or two festive tipples, Benson found a spot under the booths and fell asleep and only reappeared when staff were cleaning – he was given a bed for the night and reunited with his owner the next day."

The top 20 list of most unusual lost property items post-Christmas party according to Young's Pubs and Geronimo Inns reads:

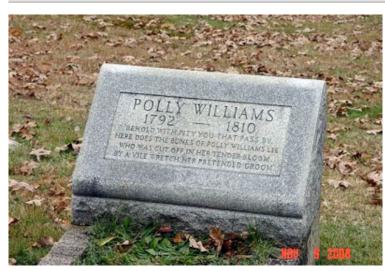
- 1. A policeman's CID badge
- 2. A single leather brogue shoe
- 3. A large sex toy
- 4. A brand new bag of LEGO
- 5. Gift-wrapped Victoria's Secret underwear
- 6. A set of false teeth
- 7. A prosthetic leg
- 8. An £8,000 professional camera
- 9. A new men's suit
- 10. A pair of fluffy pink handcuffs
- 11. A signed copy of Paul Daniel's autobiography
- 12. A stuffed otter
- 13. A child's pram
- 14. Christmas-themed underwear

- 15. A pink diamante computer mouse
- 16. A dog
- 17. Christmas jumpers
- 18. A singing turkey hat
- 19. A Mulberry handbag
- 20. A flamingo-shaped beer funnel

In the spirit of festive forgetfulness, the hospitality group is running a #Misleighed social media competition. To be in a chance to win a £500 bar tab, participants must tweet or Instagram the most embarrassing or funny thing they have left behind or found after a Christmas party using the #Misleighed hashtag.

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Polly Williams

By Samuel Little (1810)

The story: "...cut off in her youthful bloom"

Polly Williams

By Samuel Little (1810)

A lily once fell by a mower's rude prowess, Lambs perished while licking the murderer's hands; A sweet, blooming virgin was slain by her lover,

While waiting for transport in Hymen's soft bands.

Long rains swelled the rivers, bleak clouds hid the mountains, The vales lay enveloped in misty array; I climbed the wet hills, and, with heart-rending horror,

Surveyed the sad spot where all mangled she lay.

Grim rose the huge rocks and deep sunk were the caverns, With thorns and keen briars the place was o'er grown; Above, the dark brow of the mountain stood frowning,

In the valley sad midnight had built her dark throne.

Sweet girl, 'twas too rude fur thy nuptial chamber; Was it meet that a bride on the cold ground should lay? That the howling of wolves and the screams of the panther

Should furnish the songs of thy nuptial day?

How long did'st thou toil up the steep, rugged mountain?
How weary, how fainting thy delicate frame?
Yet fond hope still cheered thee, the moment approaching

To crown thy best hopes and to banish all shame.

Say, when did wild gasping succeed to fond toying?
Ah, when did'st thou find the extent of thy woes?
When did the fond lover transform to a demon?

His purpose accursed how could be disclose?

I see thee all pale and all trembling before him I hear thy entreaties - thy heart-piercing cries;
But poor lonely victim! no helper was near thee-

No father- no mother, to answer thy sighs.

The conflict begins, his bands are uplifted; I see thy blood streaming - thy screams are in vain-Rough rocks will not bear t bee, his heart is still harder-

'Twas ad'mant from hell that composed his frame.

Those fair eyes so lately with tenderness beaming Now roll with wild horror and smart with keen pain; And soon, very soon, will be closed up for ever

No sun of to-morrow will greet them again.

At thy wide-gaping wounds thy poor spirit waits fluttering - A path all unknown she must quickly pursue;
A faint, a last sigh from thy bursting heart whispered,

"Poor traitor! poor murderer! Ibid thee adieu!"

Yc rocks, ye were marble, or sure you'd have melted; But with the curs'd traitor ye too were combined, though stained with their heart's blood ye still stand relentless;

Betrayed and dserted, no friend could she find.

Ye caverns that groaned when her heartstrings were breaking, Could not you concealed the poor tortured fair? Or your grim jaws expanding have seized her tormentor

And plunged his black soul to eternal despair?

And where slept the thunder, the lightning's red anger?
Could no friendly genius have darted it down?
Had heaven forgot to be present in danger,

When lovers proved murderers and helpers were gone?

Still groan, ye deep caverns! Still shriek ye dark alleys!

Let the lost murderer witness, who near you shall stray,
The long-lengthened anguish, the soul-rending tortures

That closed the sad eve of her nuptial day.

Poor injured spirit, thy murderer is living --For Justice, grown weary, forbore to pursue; By lawyers defended, by jurors acquitted,

His presence detested still tortures our view.

If justice on earth is too often perverted,
If lawyers can rescue the worst of mankind;
The great Court of Heaven is not to be bribed -

There poor injured innocence a refuge can find.

'Twas piteous, poor Polly, that strangers' rude shoulders
Through thickets should bear thee down to thy long home,
Rough pines of the mountain thy soft limbs sup• porting,

And no gentle relative weep at thy tomb.

'Twas the cold band of strangers that placed thy death pillow, That closed thy sunk eyes and thy winding sheet gave; No friend stood around thee to sing a soft requiem,

No tear of a parent to soften thy grave.

Ye spirits that sit round the grave of the murdered, Each evening chant forth her unparalleled woes! Ye cold clods that hide her, lie light on her bosom-

Once torn by rough rocks, thy soft flesh asks repose.

Sweet sufferer, sleep on ! and may heaven protect thee !

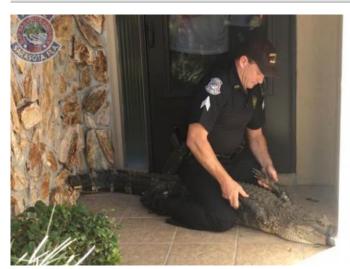
May angels sit watching thy innocent clay,

Till the last trumpet sounds, and thy soft slumbers breaking\

Calls thee home to the realms of ineffable day

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Florida police apprehend stolen alligator found wandering resident's yardupi.com



A Florida police sergeant apprehends an alligator that wandered into a resident's front yard. The alligator was later determined to have been stolen from a trapper's trailer. Screenshot: SarasotaPoliceDept/YouTube

SARASOTA, Fla., Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A Florida police sergeant was called to a resident's front yard to capture an alligator that later turned out to have been stolen from a trapper's trailer.

The Sarasota Police Department said Sgt. Bruce King responded to a home Wednesday

where a resident reported an alligator wandering around the front yard.

A video posted to YouTube by the department shows King, a former Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission employee with experience capturing gators, apprehending the reptile.

Police said King found the alligator's snout was taped shut and it had been tagged by a trapper. Investigators determined the reptile had recently been stolen when someone broke into the trapper's trailer.

The alligator was turned over to trappers with the FWC.

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Scot's hilarious tweet about bagpiper and penguin goes viral

scotsman.com

Who would have believed that the perfect Wikipedia photo caption could have been improved upon?



Piper Kerr, a member of the Scottish Piper Kerr (right), a member of the National Antarctic Expedition, plays the bagpipes for an indifferent penguin, March 1904



Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, plays the bagpipes for an indifferent penguin, March 1904

16:36Thursday 15 December 2016

An Edinburgh man's tweet pointing out a subtle edit made to a Wikipedia entry has gone viral.

The image of a bagpiper playing the pipes for an 'indifferent penguin' was taken during an expedition to the Antarctic in the early 1900s, and features piper Gilbert Kerr along with a King penguin on the ice.

Alan Ferrier tweeted side-by-side images of the two photos with the caption: "Who would

have believed that the perfect Wikipedia photo caption could have been improved upon?"

The original caption reads: "Piper Kerr, a member of the Scottish National Antarctic Expeditions, plays the bagpipes for an indifferent penguin, March 1904."

But it's the addition of just one word that has caught people's attention.

"Piper Kerr (right), a member of the Scottish National Antarctic Expeditions, plays the bagpipes for an indifferent penguin, March 1904."

Although the image caption has now sadly been altered into something a bit more serious, Alan's tweet has gone viral, resulting in more than 50,000 retweets and 94,000 likes on Twitter.

One user pointed out that Kerr received a medal 'for valuable services' to the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, but the penguin had not.

In 2002, Geoff Swinney of the Royal Museum of Scotland (now the National Museum of Scotland) told the BBC that Kerr had been instructed to play the bagpipes next to the penguin to see if the bird would react.

Swinney said: "The idea was that they were going to play [the penguin] jigs, strathspeys, reels, slow marches, etc, and see if the penguin had any reaction.

"It stood unmoved. Of course, it's largely unmoved because it's tied to the foot of the piper."

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Oliver Gee 1 December 2016 14:47 CET+01:00

Provence in the south of France adds a unique touch to its Christmas celebration with traditional "santons", little figurines with a big history.

So what is a Santon? And how do you pronounce it?

A Santon (sounds like sonn-tonn) is a

small, handmade clay figurine.

The characters typically represent vegetable sellers, bakers, men selling chestnuts, local dignitaries, or other personalities from daily village life.

And they're quite little indeed, usually between two and 15 centimetres in height.



Where do I find them?

In nativity scenes all over France - but especially in the south. They originated in Provence. More on this later.

Are these a new thing?

Hardly. They've been around in various forms for hundreds and hundreds of years, but first took a clay form at the end of the 18th century thanks to the handiwork of Marseille-born artist

Jean-Louis Lagnel.

He is generally credited with inventing the product as we know it today, although it wasn't until after his death in 1822 that they were called "Santons". Indeed, in Lagnel's time the figurines weren't heated up during the production process, so didn't last nearly as long as they do today.

Hang on, the end of the 18th century? This smells of the French revolution!

Indeed, well spotted. The French revolution saw nativity scenes banned and churches closed, so making the little saints was a way of secretly maintaining the religious traditions - at risk of being guillotined, of course.



The word Santon literally translates as "Little Saint", but there is just as much a focus on the other characters in a village, as well as Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.

These nativity scenes are supposed to be representative of the ideal Provencal village.

How do you make a Santon?

With great patience, at least according to the ten-minute video below (which is well worth a watch).



If you haven't got a spare ten mins, here's the brief version:

An artist - called a *santonnier* - carves the figurine from clay, makes a two-piece plaster cast of it, then makes several more figurines from the plaster form.

The Santons are then dried, thrown in the kiln, and then hand painted, usually in very bright colours.

Santonniers often go to great lengths to make the backgrounds of the nativity scene too, including making buildings, using local produce for trees and plants, and putting clothes on the figurines.

Can I see them being made somewhere?

Yes, of course. One option comes via the Fouque family in Provence, who've been making Santons for four generations. They open up their workshop in Provence and will even give you a guided tour in English.



And lastly... what if I want more?

Then check out the annual Santon Fair in Marseille, which has been going on since 1803. It's called the Foire aux Santons, and runs until December 31st this year.

Why not take a walking tour of the fair via the YouTube video below? Enjoy (and Merry Christmas).

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The Strange Life and Mysterious Death of the Mad King, Ludwig Il of Bavaria oddlyhistorical.com





Portrait of Louis II, King of Bavaria — Image by © Stefano Bianchetti/Corbis

Dreamers and idealists exist in every profession and strata of society. With their heads in the clouds and their feet only occasionally on the ground, these people look at the world not as it is, but see it as it never was. Sometimes their idyllic ways are harmless, but other times they can lead to great trouble for both themselves and people who depend on them.

Among history's most famous and tragic idealists is King Ludwig II of Bavaria. The ruler of Bavaria from 1864 to 1886, King Ludwig II believed in the ideals of a bygone age, where benevolent kings ruled over their subjects by the Grace of God. A romantic in every sense of the word, Ludwig found the world he lived in so far different from what he believed it should be that he renounced it and built a world of his own. His idealism would lead his country to deem him mad, and strip him of his throne. Soon after, he died under bizarre circumstances, the exact cause of his death remaining a mystery even 130 years later.

Upbringing and early life



Ludwig II as a boy, with his parents.

Ludwig II was born August 1845 to Maximilian II of Bavaria and Marie of Prussia. The royal couple were aloof with Ludwig and his brother Otto. They were strict with their boys, emphasizing duty above all else. Despite this restrictive environment, Ludwig II showed early that he had a vivid imagination. He enjoyed playing dress up, play acting, and loved art. He was generous with his possessions as well. Ludwig tended to keep to himself, and already was beginning to see himself as a divine sovereign. These traits would shape and define Ludwig for the rest of his life.

In 1864, Ludwig II was crowned king at the tender age of 18, yanked out of his idyllic life into the rough and tumble life of politics. The unprepared boy king two years later found himself embroiled in

the German War with his uncle, the King of Prussia, who promptly conquered both Bavaria and Austria. The king had gone from sovereign to vassal within two years.

But even as this was going on, Ludwig II was seemingly more engrossed in his fantasy world than the harsh realities of life at the head of a constitutional monarchy. He became fascinated by the works of Richard Wagner, a composer whose operas and music presented an idealized vision of ancient Germany and brought to life the ancient stories of his homeland. When he became king, Ludwig became Wagner's friend and patron, helping the composer to reach new heights of fame.

Castles, madness, and the death of a king



Photochrom print of Neuschwanstein Castle, from 1890.

King Ludwig II never felt like he was a "real" king. Kingship in the 19th century was far different than kingship in the medieval era Ludwig idolized. Bavaria was a constitutional monarchy, with many legal restrictions placed upon monarchical power. Ludwig was frustrated by these constrictions on what he felt was the divine rule of a king. In his mind, he envisioned an ideal holy kingdom, much like that of King Arthur and his knights, which far from being a story for Ludwig was a historical fact and the blueprint for what a kingdom should be. Since reality was far from this ideal, Ludwig isolated himself more and more in a world of his own creation.

He began grand construction projects of so-called "fairy tale" castles, magnificent structures built to evoke romantic feelings of a bygone era of chivalry. He began in 1875 to sleep during the day and to wake at night. He receded more and more into his dream land of chivalric ideals, identifying with one of King Arthur's knights, a man named Parzival (also spelled Percival) who was so pious and faithful that he became the Grail King.

A pious man himself, Ludwig deeply identified with his fictional counterpart's struggles with sin and sensuality. Particularly, Ludwig struggled with homosexual urges. He had been engaged to his cousin, Duchess Sophie Charlotte, in 1867. He repeatedly pushed back the date of the marriage, but eventually broke it off completely. He never married and remained, so far as anyone knows, a celibate bachelor the rest of his life. Driven by his struggles and piety, Ludwig went as far to remodel his own castle, Neuschwanstein, to make it into the Castle of the Holy Grail, bringing his fantasy of being Parzival into the real world.

However hard the king tried to isolate himself from the world, he could not escape the hard realities. The king had squandered his fortune on the castles and the other trappings of his fairy-tale world, and was squandering the state coffers as well. The Bavarian government intervened in 1885. He was declared insane and deposed from the throne. The former king was interned in Berg Palace while the government decided what to do with him. Only a day later, Ludwig II was found floating in the lake, dead, along with this psychiatrist Bernhard von Gudden.

What happened to the Mad King?

Ludwig II's death was a mystery from day one. The king, who was a strong swimmer, was found floating in waist deep water. The Bavarian government claimed that the king had killed himself by

drowning, and his psychiatrist ad died trying to save him. Few have bought this explanation, given the king's piety. Many believe he was murdered by an assassin. Some fishermen on the lake claimed they heard gun shots that day, along with his psychiatrist who witnessed the killing. In the 21st century, some want to exhume the king's body and use modern technology to examine him, but the House of Wittelsbach, his family, refuses and claims the murder allegations are false. Unless and until they relent, the mystery of who killed the Mad King Ludwig II will remain unsolved.

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This entry was posted in Historical Figures, Mysteries and Strange Occurrences and tagged King Ludwig II of Bavaria, mysteries, unsolved deaths, unsolved mysteries on December 11, 2016 by Andrew Kincaid.

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Photo: DPA

The Local
7 September 2016
17:05 CEST+02:00
Drilling on Sundays?
Strengstens verboten (strictly prohibited). Here are
Germany's weirdest laws and rules.

Germans are notoriously lawabiding people and have rules for even the smallest of things. We bring you seven which exemplify German

fastidiousness when it comes to public behaviour.

1. Being unconscious at your wedding

You're not likely to get stuck with the drunk-wedding-in-Las-Vegas type of spouse in Germany.

A section of the German law states that a marriage is invalid if one marital partner isn't actually aware that he or she is being wed or is unconscious during the proceeding.

So if you want to trick your crush into a life-long bond, you'll have to find a different way.

2. Causing nuclear explosions

Atomic explosion. Photo: DPA

Germany is the place to be if you want to walk in the foot steps of the Manhattan Project, which tested the first atomic bomb in New Mexico, US on July 16th 1945.

Sure, you'll most likely spend five years in prison for causing a nuclear explosion, according German law.

But what's that compared to the fun of building your own little nuclear reactor and planning the conquest of the world?

3. Beware of the chimney sweep!

Photo: DPA

Did you know it is easier for a chimney sweep to access your home than it is for the police? It's against the law to deny a chimney sweep entrance into your home if he or she demands it.

Many Germans find this frustrating as - particularly in the cities - they don't have chimneys nor can remember a time when their houses had them.

The chimney sweeps are now supposed to check carbon monoxide levels and clean away soot, but most houses heat with natural gas, which doesn't produce either.

4. Bodies must be buried in cemeteries

Even if you die, German legislation doesn't quite let go off you.

In most German states, dead bodies have to be buried within the confines of a cemetery, according to the so called *Friedhofspflicht* (cemetery obligation). The only exception is a burial at sea.

That means that, even if the deceased has been cremated, his or her remains must still be placed in a cemetery. For this reason, many families take their loved ones to Switzerland for cremation, where the handing over of the ashes to the family counts as "burial" and they may therefore keep them wherever they want.

In 2015, the northern city-state of Bremen became the first German state to implement a less strict law concerning the laying to rest of the departed. Residents of the city can now disperse the ashes of the dead on private property.

5. "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" - Germany, Germany above everything

Die Mannschaft. Photo: DPA

... is, despite all rumours, not an unlawful line to sing.

Deutschlandlied (Song of Germany) has been the national anthem since 1922. Joseph Haydn wrote the music to the song in 1797. Poet August Heinrich Hoffmann later wrote lyrics to the tune in 1841.

The "Deutschland über alles" verse then became closely tied with the Nazis' nationalism during the Third Reich and was temporarily banned at the end of the Second World War.

That's not to say that modern-day Nazi-sympathisers can freely celebrate national socialism.

Disseminating former Nazi symbols in Germany, for instance, could land you in jail for up to three years. Selling bottles of wine with Hitler's face on them is a no-no that could also land you in jail.

6. No drilling on Sundays

You may want to save putting up that picture for another day. Photo: DPA

Germans take their day of rest very seriously. Shops are shut, people take leisurely walks and there will be absolutely no domestic drilling, thank you very much.

While it is not exactly against German law, it is against most *Hausordnungen* (rules of the house) to do so.

Many Hausordnungen also forbid you from throwing glass bottles into the recycling bin at certain hours.

7. No mowing on Sundays either

In the same vein, mowing your lawn on the last day of the week is *strengstens verboten* (strictly forbidden).

If you decide to go ahead and trim the grass on a Sunday regardless, it may cost you up to €50,000, according to German law.

So those who work six days a week may soon find their tidy yard turning into a wild jungle.

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"We Have Conquered Pain!" The Uses & Abuses of Ether in History

thechirurgeonsapprentice.com

The Chirurgeon's Apprentice



ether dome mural

The surgical revolution began with an American dentist and a curiously sweet-smelling liquid known as ether.

Officially, ether had been discovered in 1275, but its stupefying effects weren't synthesized until 1540, when the German botanist and chemist Valerius Cordus created a revolutionary formula that involved adding sulfuric acid to ethyl alcohol. His contemporary Paracelsus experimented with ether on chickens, noting that when the birds drank the liquid, they would undergo prolonged sleep and awake unharmed. He concluded that the substance "quiets all suffering without any

harm and relieves all pain, and quenches all fevers, and prevents complications in all disease." [1] Yet inexplicably, it would be several hundred years before it was tested on humans.



00_01_morton-inhaler-replica-m

That moment finally arrived in 1842, when Crawford Williamson Long became the first pioneer to use ether as a general anesthetic when he removed a tumor from a patient's neck in Jefferson, Georgia. Unfortunately, Long didn't publish the results of his experiments until 1848. By that time, Boston dentist William T. G. Morton had won fame by using it while extracting a tooth painlessly from a patient on September 30, 1846 [see Morton's inhaler for administering ether, right]. An account of this successful procedure was published in a newspaper, prompting a notable surgeon to ask Morton to assist him in an operation removing a large tumor from a patient's lower jaw at Massachusetts General Hospital. After the demonstration, someone nicknamed the surgical amphitheater the "Ether Dome," and it has been known by this

name ever since.

It was an incredible breakthrough. Up until that point, surgery had been brutally painful. The patient, fully awake, would be restrained while the surgeon cut through skin, tissue, muscle, and bone. Surgeons were lauded for their brute strength and quick hands. A capable surgeon could remove a leg in under a minute. But with the discovery of ether, the need for speed in the operating theater had now vanished.

On November 18, 1846, Dr. Henry Jacob Bigelow wrote about this groundbreaking moment in *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. He described how Morton had administered what he called "Letheon" to the patient before the operation commenced. This was a gas named after the River Lethe in classical mythology which made the souls of the dead forget their lives on earth. Morton, who had patented the composition of the gas shortly after the operation, kept its parts secret, even

from the surgeons. Bigelow revealed, however, that he could detect the sickly sweet smell of ether in it. News about the miraculous substance which could render patients unconscious during surgery spread quickly around the world as surgeons rushed to test the effects of ether on their own patients.

The term "etherization" was coined, and the use of ether in surgery was celebrated in newspapers. "The history of Medicine has presented no parallel to the perfect success that has attended the use of ether," a writer at the *Exeter Flying Post* proclaimed. [2] Another journalist declared: "Oh, what delight for every feeling heart... the announcement of this noble discovery of the power to still the sense of pain, and veil the eye and memory from all the horrors of an operation...WE HAVE CONQUERED PAIN!" [3]



A curious by-product of all this was the ether parties that sprang up all over the world. Thomas Lint, a medical student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, confessed: "We sit round a table and suck [on an inhaling apparatus], like many nabobs with their hookahs. It's glorious, as you will see from this analysis of a quarter of an hour's jolly good suck." [4] He then went on to describe several "ethereal" experiences he and his fellow classmates had while under the influence of the newly discovered substance.

Ether wasn't just inhaled. It was also drunk, like alcohol. In Ireland, the substance replaced whiskey for a while, due to its low cost (a penny a draught). After drinking a glass of water, "ethermaniacs" would take a drop of the drug on their

tongues while pinching their noses and chasing it with another glass of water. Taken this way, ether hit the user hard and fast. Dr. Ernest Hart wrote that "the immediate effects of drinking ether are similar to those produced by alcohol, but everything takes place more rapidly." [5] Recovery was just as swift. Those taken into custody for drunken disorderliness were often completely sober by the time they reached the police station, with the bonus that they also suffered no hangover. In this way, 19th-century revelers could take draughts of ether several times a day, with little consequence. [6]

Today, the "Ether Dome" at Massachusetts General Hospital has become a national historic landmark [pictured below], visited by thousands of members of the public each year. Although surgeons haven't operated there for well over a hundred years, the room is still used for meetings and lectures at the hospital. The Ether Dome looks more or less like it did 165 years ago. Display cases at either end of the room contain surgical instruments from Morton's day, their blades dull and rusted with age. At the front of the room an Egyptian mummy lords over the phantom audience. One can almost detect the sweet smell of ether in the air from so long ago.

- 1. Quoted in Steve Parker, Kill or Cure: An Illustrated History of Medicine (London: DK, 2013), 174.
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- 3. London People's Journal, 9 January, 1847.
- 4. Punch, or The London Charivari (December 1847), 259.
- 5. Quoted in David J. Linden, *Pleasure: How Our Brains Make Junk Food, Exercise, Marijuana, Generosity & Gambling Feel So Good* (Viking, 2011), 31.
- 6. Sterling Haynes, "Ethermaniacs," BC Medical Journal (June 2014), Vol. 56 (No.5), 254-3.



This entry was posted in Casebooks and tagged ether, Histmed, history of medicine, history of science, history of surgery, histsci, lindseyfitzharris, med student, medical, Medical History, science, science facts, The Butchering Art, thechirurgeonsapprentice, victorian surgery.

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Exhibition in China features 700 pieces of chocolate-based art

upi.com



A French artist brought 700 pieces of his chocolate-based art to China for an exhibition. Screenshot: Newsflare

CHANGCHUN, China, Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A French artist who specializes in creating art from chocolate displayed 700 pieces of thought-provoking confections at a Chinese exhibition.

A video filmed at the Changchun, Jilin Province, exhibition, titled "Sweet Holiday, Nicolay's Chocolate," shows a wide variety of

French artist Nikolay Popov's chocolate-based paintings and sculptures.

The pieces include chocolate depictions of the Eiffel Tower, China's Terracotta Army, pottery, and musical instruments.

Popov has displayed his works in more than 50 cities around the world.

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Territorial ostrich chases car away at Israeli reserve

upi.com



An ostrich pecks at a car traveling through a wildlife reserve in Israel. Screenshot:
Newsflare

YOTVATA, Israel, Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A couple driving through a nature reserve in Israel captured video of a territorial ostrich that refused to leave their car alone.

Ari and Jess Lawson said they were driving through the Yotvata Hai-Bar Nature Reserve earlier this year when the ostrich walked directly up to the front of their car.

The video recorded by the couple shows the ostrich refuse to leave the car alone, even when it started to back away from the large bird.

The couple said the ostrich was likely a female trying to steer the car away from their nest, but the situation was complicated by Jess' lifelong fear of birds.

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Sanitation workers dig through trash to recover woman's lost mortgage money

upi.com



A Long Island woman counts the cash recovered from a trash heap by sanitation workers after it was accidentally thrown away. Screenshot: Delrayo Goodman/Facebook

LONG BEACH, N.J., Dec. 15 (UPI) -- A group of sanitation workers in New York state dug through a hill of trash to find \$5,000 accidentally thrown away by a Long Island woman.

Krishna Nadalall, 45, said his mother, Bayban, of Long Beach, had placed \$5,000 for a

mortgage payment in an envelope and she noticed the cash was missing Tuesday morning.

Nadalall, a sanitation worker, gathered three coworkers to sift through the multiple loads of trash that had been delivered to the Merrick Transfer Station.

Delrayo Goodman, a Hempstead city worker, witnessed the end of the search and posted a video of the aftermath to Facebook.

The workers were able to recover all but \$40, which was apparently lost when some of the cash fell out of the envelope.

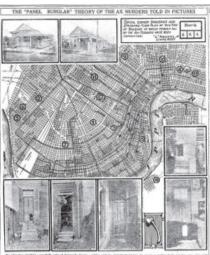
Nadalall said his mother offered to reward the men who helped him search, but they declined the offer.

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When Hell Came to Earth: The Axeman of New Orleans

oddlyhistorical.com





An illustrated map of the sites of the Axeman's crimes.

History is littered with mysterious assailants who appear from the dark shadows and terrorize the community, only to disappear almost as fast as they came. Many of these mystery figures were products of mass hysteria, such as the gas-wielding madman who stalked Mattoon, Illinois during World War II. The origins of other shadow attackers are less clear cut. The London Monster, who allegedly attacked women in 18th century London, was likely not a single individual but rather a collective delusion generated by similar style attacks committed by many individuals. The Phantom Barber of Pascagoula snipped the hair of several women. While this case may well have been a case of collective delusion on the order of the London Monster, the causes remain unclear.

However, a case in New Orleans in 1918 leaves no doubt that a mad man was on the loose. An assailant only known as the Axeman cut a swath through the Italian community of New Orleans, leaving fear and death in his wake. There is no doubt that the Axeman was a real figure and not an artifact created from common belief. Even so, his identity and motivations remain a mystery until this day.

The Killings Begin

The Axeman first materialized on May 23, 1918, leaving death in his wake. Joseph Maggio and his wife were butchered in their apartment, which was above the grocery they owned and managed together. Police found that a panel on the rear door had been chiseled out. An axe, coated with blood, was found in the apartment. Nothing else in the apartment was touched. The only other clue was a message written in chalk near the victim's home that read: "Mrs. Joseph Maggio will sit up tonight. Just Write Mrs. Toney." (check)

As the investigation progressed, police discovered more murders of Italian grocers, these from 1911. The killings bore a striking resemblance to the Maggio murders: the killer chiseled out a door panel and killed the victim with an axe he found in their home. Police suspected a mafia connection. For their part, residents barred their doors, held their families close, and prepared for more carnage.

The phantom killer struck again a month later. Louis Bossumer and his common law wife, Annie Lowe, were found by neighbors, covered in blood and bearing terrible gashes made by an axe, which the assailant left in the bedroom. A panel on the kitchen door had been chiseled out. Again, nothing was stolen.

Annie Lowe later claimed the assailant was a young, dark man. But she changed her story and claimed that Bossumer himself was the culprit. Police dismissed this story as nonsensical, since no person in their right mind would take an axed to their own face. The killer remained at large, with no real clue to his identity.

Lowe and Bossumer both survived their injuries. His next victim, Mrs. Edward Schneider, who described her attacker as tall and phantom-like, also managed to survive. The next victim, who was attacked in August, was not so fortunate. Joseph Romano, another Italian grocer, died of his injuries.

A Letter From Hell

The attacks left panic in their wake. People began to see the attacker in every shadow and around every corner. Some said he was a tall, thin man, while others claimed that he was a man dressed in women's clothes. Still others claimed that the killer was a woman, or that he was a man but a midget. Otherwise, how could he fit through the small hole of a chiseled out door panel? Others whispered even stranger tales, that perhaps the killer was not of this earth. A vengeful spirit perhaps, or even the Devil himself come to Earth to punish New Orleans for her sins.

Whatever the attacker's identity, he or she went mostly dormant through September. A few residents reported attempted break ins, and others fired shots at lurkers in the dark. After September, there were no more such reports. As suddenly as he had come, the Axeman was gone. The crisis, it seemed, was over.

Or so it seemed. But on March 10, 1919, the Axeman perpetrated the most gruesome crime yet. in the town of Gretna, near New Orleans, an assailant in dark clothes attacked the Cortimiglia family. Charles Cortimiglia struggled with the attacker, but was overcome by his wounds and died. The attacker then turned on Rosie Cortimilgia and her two year old daughter, Mary. despite Rosie's pleas, the Axeman struck, killing the two year old and severely injuring her mother, who ultimately survived the ordeal.

The bloody attack set the city into a panic, which was only stoked by a letter received by the editor of the *New Orleans Times Picayune* on Friday, March 14, 1919:

Hell, March 13, 1919

Esteemed Mortal:

They have never caught me and they never will. They have never seen me, for I am invisible, even as the ether that surrounds your earth. I am not a human being, but a spirit and a demon from the hottest hell. I am what you Orleanians and your foolish police call the Axeman.

When I see fit, I shall come and claim other victims. I alone know who they shall be. I shall leave no clue except my bloody axe, besmeared with blood and brains of he whom I have sent below to keep me company.

If you wish you may tell the police to be careful not to rile me. Of course, I am a reasonable spirit. I take no offense at the way they have conducted their investigations in the past. In fact, they have been so utterly stupid as to not only amuse me, but His

Satanic Majesty, Francis Josef, etc. But tell them to beware. Let them not try to discover what I am; for it were better that they were never born than to incur the wrath of the Axeman. I don't think there is any need of such a warning, for I feel sure the police will always dodge me, as they have in the past. They are wise and know how to keep away from all harm.

Undoubtedly, you Orleanians think of me as a most horrible murderer, which I am, but I could be much worse if I wanted to. If I wished, I could pay a visit to your city every night. At will I could slay thousands of your best citizens, for I am in close relationship with the Angel of Death.

Now, to be exact, at 12:15 (earthly time) on next Tuesday night, I am going to pass over New Orleans. In my infinite mercy, I am going to make a little proposition to you people.

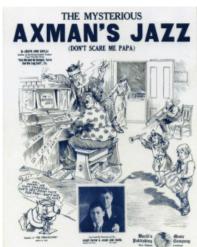
Here it is:

I am very fond of jazz music, and I swear by all the devils in the nether regions that every person shall be spared in whose home a jazz band is in full swing at the time I have just mentioned. If everyone has a jazz band going, well, then, so much the better for you people. One thing is certain and that is that some of your people who do not jazz it on Tuesday night (if there be any) will get the axe.

Well, as I am cold and crave the warmth of my native Tartarus, and it is about time I leave your earthly home, I will cease my discourse. Hoping that thou wilt publish this, that it may go well with thee, I have been, am and will be the worst spirit that ever existed either in fact or realm of fancy.

The Axeman

That night, the people of New Orleans partied as if their lives depended on it. Clubs and music houses were packed, and neighbors gathered in homes to play music. The city was alive with the strains of Jazz music. Joseph Davilla, a local composer, composed a song called "The Mysterious Axeman Jazz," which became a hit in the city. That night, no one died at the hands of the Axeman.



Last Gasp and an Enduring Mystery

The Axeman's fury seemed to have dissipated with the night of music. Months went by without incident. It seemed the city had appeased whatever dark soul, human or otherwise, that had decided to torment it.

That is, until the night of August 3, 1919, when the madman attacked a girl named Sarah Laumann in her home. Laumann survived, but this new atrocity marked a change in the Axeman's behavior-Laumann was neither a grocer nor Italian. New Orleans was horrified to realize that no one was safe from the Axeman's wrath.

He struck again that August, and in September he tried to strike again Sheet music for the Axeman's Jazz. but was thwarted by a homeowner with a gun. The final attack came in October, when the Axeman slaughtered Mike Pepitone in his bed as his wife and six children slept in the next room. Police found all of the now familiar signatures of the Axeman, but still had gleaned no clues to his identity. To this day, no one can say for certain who the Axeman was.

There is, however, a tantalizing lead in the case. A year after the last killing, a man named Joseph Mumre was shot and killed on the Pacific Coast by Mike Pepitone's widow, Esther Albano. She claimed Pepitone had killed her husband. There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest Mumre's involvement in the killings. Mumre had taken part in a group of blackmailers who preyed on the Italian community. He was sent to prison in 1911, just after the first killings attributed to the Axeman. he was paroled in 1918, around the time that the killings began again. Mumre left for the coast around the time that the Axeman killings ended in 1919.

While the timeline syncs up, there was no physical evidence linking Mumre to the crimes. His death erased any chance for police to question him and ferret out his involvement in the case, if any. The only real lead died with him. Since those terrifying two years, the Axeman has passed into legend, and enduring and macabre figure in the folklore of a city steeped in bizarre happenings.

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This entry was posted in Criminals, Killers, and Scam Artists, Mysteries and Strange Occurrences and tagged murderers, mysteries, serial killers, the New Orleans Axeman, unsolved mysteries on January 5, 2015 by Andrew Kincaid.

1.

Pingback: Bela Kiss–The Monster of Cinkota | Oddly Historical

2. Graham Clayton August 31, 2015 at 7:19 am

If Mumre was the Axeman, how did he know that the houses that he broke into had an axe that the could use?

1. Andrew Kincaid Post authorSeptember 25, 2015 at 7:35 pm

Not sure. Whoever the axeman was, he perhaps cased the places before the attack.

2. **James Bankston** November 26, 2015 at 6:53 pm

My guess is that most of the kitchen stoves in New Orleans were fueled by firewood, so he would've likely found an axe in the kitchen or just behind the house.

1.



Andrew Kincaid Post authorNovember 28, 2015 at 7:04 pm

Makes sense! That's probably where he got the axes in each case, then.

3. **Grace** September 24, 2015 at 9:00 pm

I was wondering if maybe Sarah Laumann lived near a grocer? Then wouldn't that still go along with the killers M.O.??????

1.

Andrew Kincaid Post authorSeptember 25, 2015 at 7:40 pm

That I'm not sure about. Sometimes serial killers do stray from their patterns. Perhaps to throw police off their trails. Or he just took issue with this woman for some reason. Perhaps that's what happened here.

4.

Pingback: Episode 4: The Axeman – The Conspirators Podcast

5. **Miriam C. Davis** August 25, 2016 at 4:52 am

My book on the Axeman, The Axeman of New Orleans: The True Story, will be published by Chicago Review Press in March 2017. I sort out the whole Mumfre mystery and definitively answer the question of whether he was the killer. You can pre-order on Amazon — or just admire the great book cover!

6.

Pingback: The Axeman of NOLA | Sword and Scale™

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END OF DAYS? Apocalypse due in THREE WEEKS when Jesus returns, claims Christian scientist

express.co.uk

THE world will end in just three weeks when Jesus returns to the Earth, according to a Christian computer scientist.

By Katie Mansfield

PUBLISHED:03:49, Wed, Dec 7, 2016 | UPDATED: 07:05, Wed, Dec 7, 2016



TAXI/ DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY

A Christian computer scientist claims the world will end in three weeks

By analysing the book of Daniel, Nora Roth predicts 2017 will not even get a look in, with the apocalypse due by New Year's Eve.

Ms Roth, a Bible student and computer scientist, revealed her shocking theory on her blog The Mark of the Beast Explained.

The conspiracy theorist has based her predictions on complex calculations which suggest the apocalypse is imminent.

Are 6,000 years of sin almost over? Will Jesus come in 2016? The Bible

presents enlightening, logical, and compelling answers to these questions. In short, yes!

Nora Roth

After looking at Bible passages and examining "God's clocks of the sevens" based on the so-called "sevens" prophecy, Ms Roth claims "everlasting righteousness will be brought in" and Earth will be "left to rest" for a millennium.

Writing on her blog Ms Roth said: "Are 6,000 years of sin almost over? Will Jesus come in 2016? The Bible presents enlightening, logical, and compelling answers to these questions. In short, yes!"

The Christian scientist looks to the Book of Daniel to prove her point.

In the story, Gabriel says "Seventy sevens are decreed [...] to put an end to sin."

Ms Roth says the "sevens" are a unit of time known as the Jubilee Cycle and, by extending the scale, claims the world will end in 2016.

But despite Ms Roth's macabre prediction, she admits that the Bible does not reveal when the doomsday will arrive.

Matthew 24 says: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

Nora Roth based her calculations on the Book of Daniel

Ms Roth says 2016 will be the end of 6,000 years of sin

Baptist minster Mark Woods, writing for Christian Today, has poured scorn on the theory.

He said: "This way of reading the Bible is called 'millenarianism', and it tends to be a function of extreme biblical literalism and a lot of social stress – war, poverty, social change etc. There's a lot of that going on at the moment."





AGE FOTOSTOCK

The minister says it would be a "sheer coincidence" for someone to correctly predict the end of the world.

Nora Roth predicts the apocalypse will come by New Year's Eve

Mr Woods says Ms Roth's prediction should not stop anyone from writing their Christmas cards

and warns people to be careful when reading the Books of Daniel and Revelation.

He said: "They are difficult books, and we should be very cautious about how we interpret them. As a general rule, it's safe to say they haven't got much to say about the future, but they have a lot to say about the present.

"And while Ms Roth is almost certainly wrong about the Rapture coming by December 31, Jesus also tells his disciples to watch and be ready for his coming at any time."



MOMENT

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The perfect beer will cost you \$42,000

16/12/2016 news.com.au

A brewery is promising the best beer of your life thanks to a personalised test using your DNA

December 16, 20161:16pm



Would you pay \$42,000 for a frothie?

A BREWERY is promising the best beer of your life thanks to a personalised test using your DNA.

Punters will have a batch of beer whipped up according to their genetic code — for the sum of \$A42,000.

They simply complete a spit test, which is sent to a lab at personal genetics company 23andMe.

The test will determine whether you prefer things sweet or bitter.

It picks up on propylthiouracil — a chemical similar to the bitter compounds found in cabbage, raw broccoli, coffee, tonic water and dark beers.

Within weeks, customers are invited in for a one-to-one session with Meantime Brewery's MasterBrewer, who will work to create the tastiest brew around.

Once they've come up with the ultimate recipe, customers can name their beer and have it hand delivered straight to their door.



Meantime's Brewmaster, Ciaran Giblin, has become the first brewer in history to brew a beer dictated by his own DNA

Meantime's Brewmaster, Ciaran Giblin, has become the first brewer in history to brew a beer dictated by his own DNASource:Supplied

Punters can even get kegs shipped to their local pub for an extra cost.

Ciaran Giblin, MasterBrewer, first came up with the idea of creating a beer tailored for one person after dreaming up his own ultimate beer.

"Having been aware of the potential of at-home genetic mapping, I sent a

simple saliva sample to 23andMe; the results gave me the tools I needed to develop a recipe based on the elements my senses are most attuned to enjoy," he said.

And his pale ale has been a hit.

Following the successful test brew, his recipe will soon be available as a seasonal brew from The Meantime Tasting Rooms in Greenwich.

This story first appeared on The Sun.

News Limited Copyright © 2016. All times AEDT (GMT +11).

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Booby found on UK beach flown back to Caribbean home

yahoo.com

LONDON (AP) — Norman the booby bird may have clocked up the most unlikely air miles in aviation history.

The red-footed booby, a native of tropical zones, was discovered on a southern English beach Sept. 4, some 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometers) from his nearest Caribbean habitat. It was first recorded sighting of the species in Britain.

Named Norman by his rescuers, the starving, dehydrated bird spent months under heat lamps as a Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wildlife center nursed him back to health.

Wildlife officials said Saturday that the bird is back where he belongs, a Cayman Islands nature reserve following a 12-hour British Airways flight Thursday with a veterinary escort. The pilot, Capt. Shaun Griffiths, described Norman as "by far the most unusual" passenger he's ever had.

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Coast Guard, Canada Navy seize 26 tons of cocaine in Pacific

Curt Anderson, Ap Legal Affairs Writer Updated 2:09 pm, Friday, December 16, 2016

timesunion.com

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — More than 26 tons of cocaine worth at least \$715 million was brought ashore Thursday in Florida following multiple recent seizures by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Navy in the eastern Pacific.

Coast Guard officers said at a news conference Thursday that the drugs brought to Fort Lauderdale came from 27 separate vessel interdictions and five bale recovery operations off Central and South America over the past three months.

Pallets containing the drugs, many wrapped in brightly colored plastic and some bearing labels such as "white sugar" or "pork," covered the entire flight deck of the 418-foot Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton.

Vice Admiral Karl Schultz, Coast Guard commander in the Atlantic, said the seizures are part of an effort to target vessels bringing cocaine north by sea from Colombia, Peru and Bolivia before the loads reach land and are divided up into much smaller amounts for smuggling into the U.S. and Canada.

Cocaine seizures at sea result in three times more drugs intercepted than all U.S. land-based law enforcement efforts combined, Shultz added.

HealthGrove | Graphiq

"When we interdict drugs at sea, they are large quantities," he said. "That's kind of the impact of doing this at sea."

Authorities say about 100 suspected smugglers were detained in the various interdictions. Some are being prosecuted in South Florida, one reason the Hamilton brought the cocaine to Port Everglades. The Hamilton, a national security cutter, is based in Charleston, South Carolina.

Commodore Craig Baines, commander of the Royal Canadian Naval Atlantic Fleet, said two British Columbia-based vessels were responsible for seizing more than 3,000 pounds of the cocaine offloaded Thursday as part of the joint operations.

"It is a tangible example of our collective efforts to keep narcotics off our streets while at the same time promoting regional security," Baines said.

In the federal fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, Schultz said similar operations at sea resulted in the seizure of more than 221 tons of cocaine and numerous arrests. The cocaine brought ashore Thursday represents 75 percent of the drugs seized so far this fiscal year, he said.

Hamilton Capt. Scott Clendenin said the smugglers are constantly changing tactics, such as using submarine-like vessels that operate just beneath the waves. He said the Hamilton has the most updated surveillance and tracking equipment available, giving the Coast Guard a better chance of catching the smugglers even at night.

HealthGrove | Graphiq

"It's a very difficult operating environment. They have an advantage but we are taking over that advantage," Clendenin said.

The seized cocaine typically is kept in a secure location as evidence for criminal prosecutions and is eventually burned by the Drug Enforcement Administration, officials said.

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Monster wave dubbed the BONE CRUNCHER from biggest swell in **WORLD to hit CORNWALL**

express.co.uk



Monster wave dubbed the BONE **CRUNCHER** from biggest swell in **WORLD to hit CORNWALL**

CORNWALL is going to be hit with a MONSTER wave with the biggest swells in the world expected to crash down on the British

By Rebecca Perring

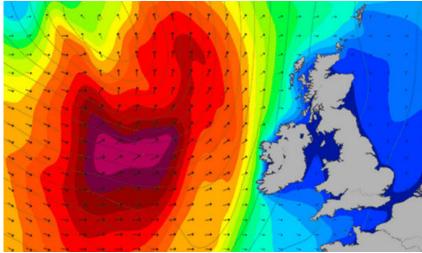
coastline.

PUBLISHED: 14:10, Fri, Dec 16, 2016 | UPDATED: 16:44, Fri, Dec 16, 2016

The infamous Cribbar - dubbed the Bone Cruncher and the Widow Maker - is set to make an appearance in Newquay tomorrow.

The legendary waves, which only makes an appearance a handful of times each year, are set to swell to 20ft.

Jason Lock, from surf forecasting website magicseaweed, said: "The largest waves in the world will hit Cornwall and the rest of Europe tomorrow.



Magic seaweed

"What we are forecasting for Cornwall is an extremely rare combination of light, offshore winds, and a westerly 14ft swell with a long 17 second period - which is the time it takes for two successive waves to pass through a determined point.

"Those factors mean the largest surfable waves in the world will be found in Cornwall and selected parts of Europe tomorrow.

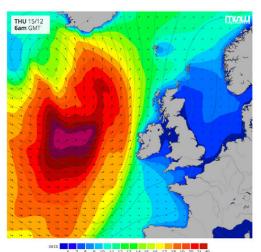
"Current wave size sits at around the

20ft mark, but we could see those numbers increase at certain spots such as the Cribbar, which will see waves in excess of 20ft.

"The Cribbar is a fickle, heavy wave but the combination of wind, swell direction and the size of swell means it may awaken, something it only does a few times a year."

The Cribbar earned the names The Widow Maker and The Bone Church because of the dangers riding them. They are created when low pressure systems in the Atlantic trigger huge swells which rise up as they pass over a rocky shelf named the Cribber Reef off Newquay.

Professional surfer Ben Skinner said: "The Cribbar doesn't happen that often. You need the right winds, swell and tide. "It's quite tricky and you just never know. As a wave – it's raw.



"It's far out to sea and it's got some serious consequences if thing don't go right. I've had a few times when things haven't gone well."

He told the Plymouth Herald: "We don't have any big waves in the UK – you do in Ireland, but certainly not in England and Cornwall. "Cribbar is the best we've got and it's useful for people to train for bigger waves like you see in Hawaii."

Magic Seaweed



PLYMOUTH HERALD

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Dwarf tossed by drunken England rugby fan has died aged 42

06:58 EST, 17 December 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Martin Henderson, who rose to worldwide fame five years ago after he was tossed by a drunken Rugby fan, has died

A dwarf who rose to worldwide fame five years ago after he was tossed by a drunken Rugby fan has died aged 42.

Martin Henderson suffered serious injuries in the prank which was blamed on the notorious antics of the England rugby team.

His story went around the world when Game of Thrones star Peter Dinklage asked fans to Google his name during his Golden Globes victory speech in January 2012.

But 4ft 2in Martin, from Milborne Port, Somerset, reportedly died a few months ago, according to former partner Rebecca Henderson.

Martin's name was trending worldwide on Twitter in 2012 thanks to fellow dwarf actor Peter Dinklage.

The US star was picking up the Best Supporting Actor award at the glittering ceremony in California when he said: 'I want to mention a gentleman I'm thinking about in England.

'His name is Martin Henderson. Google him.'

This came after he was told he could end up in a wheelchair because of injuries sustained when he was picked up and dropped on the floor by a drunken yob.

The incident took place while he out celebrating his 37th birthday on October 7, 2011 when he had stepped outside for a cigarette.

He suffered from spinal stenosis and struggled to walk properly since and lost the strength in his back and legs. He went on to need a walking frame.

The 4ft 2inch actor, who played a goblin in two Harry Potter films, blamed the England rugby union team for the incident during the team's World Cup campaign.

Mr Henderson's story went around the world when Game of Thrones star Peter Dinklage asked fans to Google his name during his Golden Globes victory speech in January 2012

It came one month after star Mike Tindall and several of his teammates admitted attending a 'dwarf tossing' event in a New Zealand bar.

Martin more recently was thrust into the spotlight after two men allegedly broke into his home in the middle of the night and kidnapped him.

He was allegedly made to drive to a bank on Wednesday, February 17, in Sherborne in his specially-adapted Ford Galaxy car.

At the time a neighbour said: 'He's scared to live here now and has gone away for a few days.

'We moved here to get away from it all as Milborne Port is a quiet place; I've never seen anything like this happen before here.

'It's very scary; there were armed police all over the courtyard the next day. I originally thought it was people just going upstairs.'

Peter Dinklage playing Tyrion Lannister in HBO's Game Of Thrones. On the right is Sophie Turner as Sansa Stark

He reportedly never came back to the house after the incident and new people are now living there.

One man has been charged, jointly with another, for robbing Martin's mobile phone and a bottle of aftershave on February 17.

The man was also alleged, jointly with another, to have unlawfully and by force or fraud took or carried away Mr Henderson against his will on the same date.

He is due to stand trial in the New Year.

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Elderly man told he is not 'mentally capable' to divorce his wife

dailymail.co.uk 15:52 EST, 15 December 2016 |

The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled Elmer Riehle (pictured) cannot legally divorce his wife, Carolyn

An 88-year-old man has been told he is not mentally capable to divorce from his wife - who is also his courtappointed guardian.

The Kentucky Supreme Court ruled Elmer Riehle cannot legally divorce his wife, Carolyn, after two lower courts had reached the same verdict after citing a 1943 legal precedent.

Riehle has been diagnosed with frontal lobe dementia.

The court appointed his wife as his legal guardian in 2008. In 2013, Riehle first filed for divorce.

Kentucky's Supreme Court said while announcing its decision that the 88-year-old's guardian would have to file the divorce for him.

In this instance, Carolyn does not want a divorce from her husband.

Carolyn says she cares deeply for Elmer and he needs a guardian to stop him from wasting the family's money on 'internet overseas pyramid schemes.' She says Elmer does not understand what he is doing, and is most likely unaware he is seeking a divorce.

Riehle, seen in a picture being held by lawyer Steven Megerle, has been diagnosed with frontal lobe dementia

The decision was made in the Kentucky Supreme Court (pictured) by Justice Bill Cunningham

Carolyn says Elmer is now subject to another scammer: his attorney, who is helping him get a divorce so he can spend money 'without the oversight of Carolyn.'

'In such a scenario, the worst fears of Carolyn would be realized as Elmer is fleeced and drained by his enablers, and left out on the street when he has no longer has any ability to support himself,' Carolyn's attorney Michael McKinney wrote in court documents.

Justice Bill Cunningham called it a 'peculiar conundrum' for Riehle, but indicated the state legislature could change the law.

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Facts verified in Santa's hospital visit story

wbir.com

Dec. 14, 2016: A Santa who granted a dying boy his wish is addressing concerns about his story, and his wife is sharing her account of that emotional experience.

1:44 AM. EST December 15, 2016

KNOXVILLE, TENN. - The story of a Santa who granted a dying boy his final Christmas wish touched hearts around the world, but skeptics are raising concerns about story details that hadn't been verified.

Eric Schmitt-Matzen, whose Santa story was originally shared by Knoxville News Sentinel columnist Sam Venable, says the account of a terminally ill five-year-old boy dying in his arms at a hospital is true.

WBIR 10News has independently verified several critical details of this story, but has agreed not to publish those for the sake of privacy. Schmitt-Matzen maintains his desire to protect all names involved.

In addition, Schmitt-Matzen's wife, Sharon, of 38 years spoke with 10News on Wednesday night and also helped fill in details of her husband's story and his response to what happened that day in what she said was mid-October. That differs from Schmitt-Matzen's original account of the timeline, in which he said the death happened "about six weeks ago." Schmitt-Matzen told 10News he had the time wrong and that his wife remembers those things better than he does.

"I know how he reacted that next morning, and this is something that weighed so heavy on him," Sharon Schmitt-Matzen said of her husband's experience. "I just know that he just needed time by himself to accept what happened because he obviously wasn't prepared for a child to die in his arms."

Out of a promise of privacy to the family and the nurse, Schmitt-Matzen has not revealed any names or identifying details.

Eric and Sharon Schmitt-Matzen admit if the nurse would come forward and verify this story, that would address a lot of questions. They also said the family – if they choose to speak – could confirm the facts as well.

Sharon said she hopes the nurse "would, at least, step forward and say, 'Yes, I did call Eric and I can verify that he came.'"

The nurse, Schmitt-Matzen said, fears her job could be in jeopardy if she came forward, for calling a non-family member into an ICU without prior hospital approval and then having that person publicly share his story.

"If she were to be fired for what she did out of the love of that child, then the hospital administrators and HR, they need to take a second look at their policies," Sharon Schmitt-Matzen said. "I really don't think that she should be fired."

"Believe me, if there's anybody in the world who would like to see her come out, it's me," Eric Schmitt-Matzen said.

He, however, will not be the one to reveal that information - or anything about the family.

"If the family wants to come out and say who they were, I'll stand beside them. I'll support them in any way I can, but the way my life's been upset in the last three days, four days, don't do it. You have enough problems. Your family will be tore apart more than it is now," he said. "But, from a selfish point of view, they'd be coming to my rescue. But who needs rescue here? Me or them?"

As this story has spread around the world, that missing proof has caused some to question Schmitt-Matzen's account.

Schmitt-Matzen has worked as a professional Santa for six years, in addition to his day job as a mechanical engineer and co-owner at Packing Seals & Engineering in Jacksboro.

It was in his capacity as a Santa, he said, that a nurse came to know him, when she'd bring a child to see him at Christmas. Schmitt-Matzen said it was this nurse who called on him one day in mid-October to come to the bedside of a terminally ill little boy.

The boy was more concerned about missing Christmas than he was about dying, Schmitt-Matzen said.

"He couldn't fathom what dying was, but he knew how much fun Christmas was," he said.

During the visit, Schmitt-Matzen said, the boy died in his arms.

It was so emotionally impactful, he said, he told not only his wife but also several of his friends, two of whom he reached by phone on Wednesday evening, when 10News was conducting an in-person follow-up interview with him.

Daniel Cunningham is one of those friends. He lives in Blount County and recalled what Schmitt-Matzen told him in a phone call exactly one week after the incident happened.

"You kind of said that (the boy) gave you a hug, then he just went limp at that point, and then you said that you looked up at the ceiling, kinda was fighting back the tears at that point," Cunningham said. "You were noticeably shaken in your voice about this whole ordeal."

Schmitt-Matzen then showed 10News written messages on his phone to two different friends. Both exchanges match dates in Schmitt-Matzen's mid-October timeline of the ordeal. Those dates, he said, were well before he was ever contacted by columnist Sam Venable.

Two friends, Schmitt-Matzen's wife and time-stamped messages help support the story of a man visibly shaken by the hospital visit.

If that's not enough to convince somebody, Schmitt-Matzen said he doesn't care.

"If I talk now, Santa folded. And I ain't doing it," he said resolutely. " I'm not doing it."

It's a story that's close to his heart - one that brings him to tears in the re-telling - and he's sticking by it.

(© 2016 WBIR)

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by: Kimberly Miller, The Palm Beach Post Updated: Dec 15, 2016 - 11:38 AM



A Florida man found dead outside his Panhandle home Tuesday night is believed to have been struck by lightning, according to the National Weather Service.

December lightning deaths are rare, Tuesday's incident in Escambia County is the first lightning-related December death since 1998 when a man was killed in Paradise

Valley, Ariz.

John Jensenius, a lightning expert with the National Weather Service, said Tuesday's death is the ninth for Florida this year.

Nationally, 38 lightning-related deaths have occurred in 2016, which is the most since 2007.

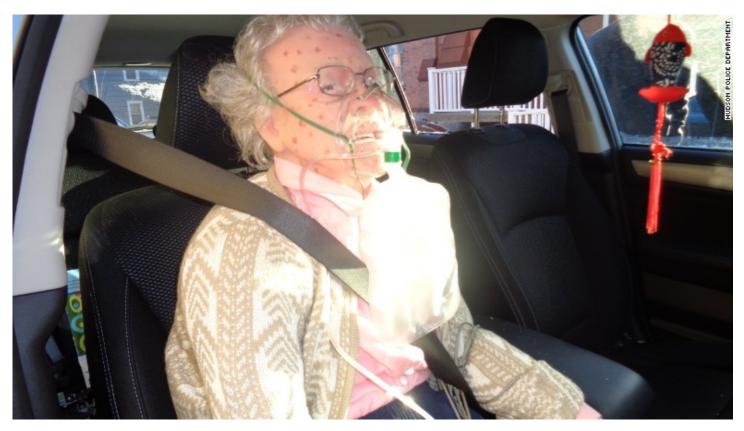
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U.S. +

Live TV

By Andreas Preuss, CNN

Updated 7:13 AM ET, Sat December 17, 2016



Police in Hudson, New York, said an officer smashed a car window to rescue a reportedly frozen woman. "She" turned out to be medical mannequin.

Story highlights

Police responded to reports of a frozen woman in car

After breaking car window, police discovered medical mannequin

(CNN) — The report to police was deadly serious -- an elderly woman apparently frozen to death inside a parked car in Hudson, New York.

Police in the city said they responded to the call Friday morning with an emergency rescue crew. It was cold -- around five degrees Fahrenheit -- and the car had snow cover and looked like it hadn't been moved in a while.

Authorities saw an elderly woman in the front passenger seat, police said. She was wearing an oxygen mask. She did not move and was unresponsive.

An officer smashed the rear window, opened the door...and discovered the "woman" was really a life sized mannequin. The kind that is used in CPR training.

But this was no ordinary mannequin. Photos from the police show it was very detailed -- with hair, real clothing and shoes and even skin blemishes. It was even wearing a seat belt.

U.S. +



Police photo shows life sized mannequin in detail, seated in front passenger seat and wearing a seat belt

Police: Car owner was 'quite vocal'

Hudson police said the owner of the car eventually showed up at the scene. The unidentified man said he is a sales rep for a company that makes medical training devices.

He told police he always transports the mannequin in his car wearing a seat belt and was upset that police broke his car window.

"He apparently was quite vocal and vulgar to my Sergeant," Hudson Police Chief Edward Moore said in a statement.

No charged were filed, but Chief Moore defended the action of his officer.

"If you park your locked vehicle on the street on a sub-zero night with a life size realistic mannequin seated in it ... we will break your window," he said.

Follow @andreascnn

CNN's Jessica Prater contributed to this story

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Silver Star, Purple Heart Found in Goodwill Donations

By Northern Virginia Bureau Published at 9:15 PM EST on Dec 15, 2016 | Updated at 9:18 PM EST on Dec 15, 2016

nbcwashington.com

Goodwill wants to find the rightful owner of two of our military's most honored decorations that were discovered in bags of items donated in Annandale, Virginia, in the spring or summer.

A Silver Star for heroism and a Purple Heart for dying on the battlefield bear the name of Robert Entzminger, a U.S. Army second lieutenant killed fighting in Belgium during World War II. Crossfire caught him on his third day in battle.

Entzminger attended Clemson University, but little else is known about him or who his closest family or friends might be.

"We've been conducting our own due diligence to track down a family member," said Brendan Hurley of Goodwill. "We posted it online through Facebook and received several leads, but each of those leads has led to a dead end at this point."

If the rightful owners aren't found, Clemson has offered to add the medals to its wall of heroes.

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Hundreds of blackbirds flock to backyard swimming pool

16:30 EST, 17 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and

health stories

'They're coming! They're coming!': Hitchcockesque moment hundreds of blackbirds descend on backyard pool

- Birds descend on suburban swimming pool
 - After sitting on the water for several seconds, the birds fly off
- Moments later the entire place is totally quiet once more

By Dailymail.com Reporter

In a scene that appears more reminiscent of Hitchcock's horror movie The Birds, a peaceful home in the woods, became the meeting point for hundreds of blackbirds who were seen flocking to a swimming pool with chilling effect.

The winged visitors were all caught on camera by a terrified homeowner who saw the birds flying around the pool area and roosting on nearby trees around the perimeter.

They then moved towards the center of the swimming pool taking up virtually every available space.

Scroll down for video...



Hundreds of birds flock to a backyard swimming pool leaving its owner a little freaked out!

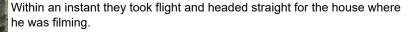


The birds gather and simply sit on the surface of the water for no apparent reason

After tapping on the window, the birds are given a scare and immediately take flight

The homeowner then

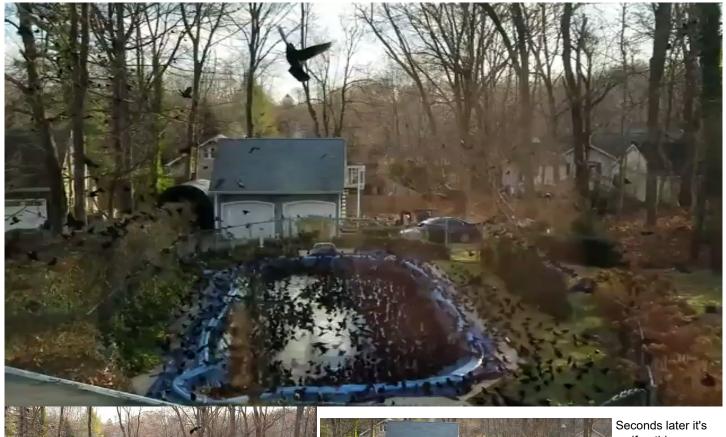
decided to open the window to get a clearer look but in doing do scared the birds away.



The cameraman quickly shut the window in case any decided to try and head indoors.

Seconds later, the entire scene was early quiet and all evidence that the birds were ever present had disappeared.









Seconds later it's as if nothing ever happened - yet it was all caught on camera!

The scene is reminiscent of the 1963 Alfred Hitchcock film The Birds where the creatures are seen attacking humans



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GhostStudy.com Backyard pics reveal Indian tribe!

I will try to explain what I see in the pictures and what my friends have thought. I tried several times to show these photos to Native Americans, but they are afraid of them. This is because they agree, the photos are a ritual of cremation. The pictures were taken in my backyard in Placentia, Orange County, California September 1969. They were taken with a Kodak Brownie Hawkeye 20, with b/w 620 film. The camera cost \$10.00 in 1961, and I had to wind the film myself. There were 20 photos on the roll. 19 photos developed, number 20 was black on the negative. -Rita

MY STORY

Submitted by Rita Swift

In July 1997, I went to the guest bedroom to search for some 8mm film I had stored in an antique cedar chest. I was wanting to put our family pictures on a VHS tape when I noticed an old Kodak box with a roll of b/w undeveloped film on a self in the cedar chest. I had written "taken in our backyard Sept. 1969". Little did I know, the photos that should have been developed, were stored for 28 years! What a mystery these photos would become in my life. Considering what had developed in the circle of the lens that would normally be impossible for a \$10.00 Kodak Brownie Hawkeye using 620 film. When I took the film to Main Photo in Yorba Linda, they told me not to expect success in developing because of age. But, what a surprise when 19 of the 20 developed successfully! That evening, my daughter Lisa started looking though the photos, saying they were typical photos of her at 5 years old, her dog, cat, swing set, just a normal backyard, with great clarity!

When we looked at **PHOTO 16**, it was of Lisa standing by the sliding glass door, just outside the living room. Nothing unusual other than she seemed to be surrounded by Ectoplasmic mist. Ghoststudy notes however that this could just be the reflection from the glass.

PHOTO 17, was a total surprise! There are three Native Americans dancing in a row past my camera, only developed in the camera lens with the most unusual bright light on them. They appear to be Shamans preparing for a ritual.

The third Native American is strangely in total shadow or silhouette, but there are bright feathers behind his head and in front of the second dancer. There is an extremely bright area, perhaps a pool of water, in the distant background. The circle of the lens is very profound, and natural light and shadow seem not of this world. The first Indian appears to be in a crouched position, wearing a dried half of a gourd on his head. I remember finding similar gourd plants growing in the sage brush on my grandparents ranch at the foot of Mount Baldy in San Bernardino County, here in California.



PHOTO 18, becomes a greater mystery! There appears to be a ritual with an oxen at a lower level in the foreground. Possibly, there is a body tied to the back of the oxen. In the center there are two Shamans, on their knees, the one in the rear



can be

seen, but is transparent, both holding a long pole with a paddle on the end touching the back of the oxen. To the right there is an individual with a flute wearing a feathered skirt. There is a transparent figure right behind the flute player possibly holding a pole. This is where the mystery becomes stranger, there appears to be a Victorian woman, blonde hair, wearing a fur collared opera coat just to the right of the flute player, head tilted up, looking to the background. She seems to be sitting between more poles pointed in the direction of the oxen. The background seems distorted, with large areas of ectoplasm. To the left side of the Native Americans in the center, there is another feathered ghostly individual. To the right side of this individual, behind the oxen there is a female on her knees facing the oxen. She is transparent, but her long black hair is touching the ground. She is reaching for a pole structure behind and above her. Some have told me there appears to be an evil face in the foreground, over the oxen's back? The lens circle is still visible, but for some reason, fading. Shadow and light are unnatural, exhibiting an eerie scene.

PHOTO 19.

continues the ritual with a different view of the spirit village. Eyes go to the direct foreground where it appears to be a number of bodies being cremated, bathed in extremely bright light. The lens circle is fading, but still visible. To the left, one can see a captive in the complete darkness, nude with arms crossed and tied. There is a group of Shamans with poles to the right of the captive,



walking toward the cremation scene. In the center, walking at an angle to the right blocked by a pole, is a Victorian man dressed in a tall Lincoln type hat wearing an opera coat. He is walking at a fast pace, oblivious to his surroundings. Some feel he is walking toward the Victorian woman in the previous photo. Instead of a Victorian setting, they are in an Indian village. Why are they there? Do they have some connection with my property too? Was there a rancho or Victorian home here after the Indians were banished? Why they are in the photos is a mystery to all that have studied the photographs at length. Behind him, appears to be individuals resting around

an unusually bright pool of water, some brightly lit, others in shadow. There is a ghostly hut behind

them with eerie orbs and ectoplasm floating above them. Going back to the right front, there is a ghostly pig sniffing a body that appears to be in the process of being cremated. To the right rear of the pig, there is a group huddled together with a small child to the far left of the group. Behind them are areas of ectoplasm with two bright balls of light above their heads. These balls are similar to the balls of light, coming out of the sliding glass door in the first photo, on the right side of Lisa. The negative of PHOTO 20, went totally black, possibly receiving a blast of bright light when the camera snapped the picture.

I contacted the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles and through their information, and books suggested by them, the Native Americans in these photographs, resemble the Chumash, tribes that were not studied at great length. I live in Orange County very close to the Santa Ana River, where a number of villages were located. Canyons are near my area, where the tribes roamed and hunted. They knew where to dig for water from underground streams, therefore had pools of water in their villages. They decorated themselves with feathers from the river birds and wore skirts made of feathers and river reeds. The Chumash inland, cremated their dead in extensive ceremonies, that could last for days. In the late 1700's the Spanish arrived in my area, forcing the Chumash to help build the 21 missions built the length of California. They were renamed Gabrielinos by the Spanish.

They rapidly died from abuse and common diseases brought by the Spanish. My area is a prehistoric freeway for the inland route of California. In 1837, Mexico gave Don Pacifico Ontiveros an extensive land grant called Rancho San Juan de Santa Ana. My home is on this former land grant. When California became a state in 1848, as stated before, the Chumash were exterminated by violence, disease or even had bounties put on their heads like coyotes, if they did not leave. I date these photos in the late 1700's into the 1800's because the Chumash were not aware of farm animals until the Spanish soldiers arrived. In 1962, we were planting a tree in our backyard, when we discovered partly cremated bones including a jaw bone with some teeth in the soil. They were taken to California State College at Long Beach. We were told they were of a Mongol type female approximately 7,000 years old. What a surprise this was to us, a newly married young couple with our first new home! I often walked to that area in our yard and wondered what she looked like and how she died. The college kept the bones for further study. Our home sits where there was a large citrus grove, planted in the early 1900's. In 1972, we built a large living room that covered threeforths of our backyard. There is a baby grand piano sitting where we found the bones. When Lisa was small and taking piano lessons, she used to hear a flute playing next to her when she practiced. She used to scream at me saying, "The flutes paying again. Can I quit practicing?" I believe they are still here, their entry point is in the center of the house. Often we smell a sweet burning wood that follows us from room to room and then disappears as quickly as it comes. We hear children giggling where there are no children and observe life size "shadow people" that appear behind us only to dart away at a great speed, but not fast enough so we can see them. Recently we bought a new computer, and the screen saver has a grotto scene with moving colorful reef fish moving back and forth. The audio sounds like water gushing and bubbling. There is also sounds of a tropical storm. On several occasions, we have found many tiny finger prints on the screen, like someone was trying to follow the moving fish. Lisa and I are the only ones living here and using the computer. There is often the wood smell near us when we are working on the computer. Many friends have smelled the wood burning, wasting time, sniffing the air, walking through our home and outside, only to have it disappear in a second, leaving them standing there feeling foolish.

I recently drove through Carbon Canyon, a beautiful wild place just north of my home. I stopped to look at what remains of the virgin hills and valleys. There are places there in the canyon where time has stood still. The trees and vegetation have not changed since the time that the Indian villages were there. The experience with the photographs made me realize that I was blind to my

surroundings. For some reason, I feel the spirits in the photographs wanted me to know that they had a life here and that they want to be remembered; they are doing their best to draw my attention to that fact. The future and the past; what does this mean in time? They were here, as I am now here, and will someday be just a memory as they are now.

Thank you, Rita Swift.

PS. I found a place in New York that can supply the old 620 film. Maybe, I should get the old camera out and see what it photographs? It appears to have the gift

Join the Ghost Study Message Board

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This months picsHome pagePhoto gallery

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Jesus statue appears to move its head in weird footage from Mexico

06:23 EST, 17 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Jesus statue appears to move its head in weird footage filmed in Catholic procession in Mexico

- The statue of Jesus appears to move its head and its
 com eyes briefly open
 - Some people argued the bizarre event was a sign sent down by God
- But many others said video filmed in Saltillo, north-east Mexico was a hoax

By Rory Tingle For Mailonline

A statue of Jesus was seen apparently moving its head during a Catholic procession, leading some to believe it was a sign from God.

But many others argued the footage - filmed in Saltillo, north-east Mexico - was a hoax or an optical illusion.

The head of the statue of Christ can be seen lifting up, and its eyes appear to open.



A statue of Jesus was seen apparently moving its head during a Catholic procession, leading some to believe it was a sign from God

The video was filmed in June last year, but recently went viral after being shared on YouTube.

The movement could have been caused by the wind or human interference, but this is not clear.

Sceptical commenters pointed out that there appears to be a hand moving under the statue's tunic before the movements occur.

One wrote: 'It's silly people who would swallow this story.'

Another said: 'The camera is focusing as it is is expecting the movement to happen.'



Others suggested the yellow ribbon attached to Christ's cross had been pulled.

Only a very small number of similar occurrences have been accepted by the Catholic Church as valid miracles, with numerous others proven to be hoaxes.



But many others say the footage - filmed in Saltillo, north-east Mexico - is a hoax or an optical illusion

But it has accepted some modern events as miracles, such as the recovery from Parkinson's Disease of Marie Simon-Pierre, attributed to the late Pope John Paul II.

Claims of miracles that are never confirmed by the Church are common.

Earlier this week,a man, from Jalisco, Mexico, claimed that a statue of the Virgin Mary he kept in his house had been weeping blood for four months.

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Last fluent speaker of Mandan dies

Bob Collins December 14, 2016, 2:50 PM

mprnews.org

Edwin Benson has died and with him a language may also pass on.

Benson, of Twin Buttes on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in west-central North Dakota, was the last living person who could fluently speak Mandan, Forum Communications reports.

"He said he'd done enough now and he was tired," his daughter, Heidi Hernandez, said of her dad's efforts to keep the language alive. "This language which made Dad so well-known across the world, I'm afraid it's extinct."

Benson's mother died when he was young so he was raised mostly by his grandfather, who spoke only the Mandan language and did not allow English to be spoken in his home.

His name used to be Ma-doke-wa-des-she, he said.

"It's sad that I can't speak my language that I knew, the first language that I knew, and to grow old with, to no one today. To no one at all. And it's a lonely life," he told the Bismarck Tribune in a 2009 interview.

Benson was 85.

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Meat and potato pie sent into space by Wigan scientists

arstechnica.co.uk



A team of British scientists have sent what's believed to be the first ever pie launched into the upper stratosphere, or near space depending your preferred nomenclature.

The aim? To see if the meat-and-potato pastry's molecular structure is affected by its wobbly journey above the Earth, thereby making it a slightly less stodgy snack, and to find out how well it would be cooked by the friction from re-entry.

SentIntoSpace

It was launched on Thursday morning,

tethered to a helium-filled weather balloon and a camera rig to beam real-time images of its pieoneering ascent. Mission control was a pub called Fifteens at the Fox near the town of Wigan, and the whole thing was masterminded by the Sheffield-based hobby group SentIntoSpace, which specialises in near-space launches. Footage of the mission can be seen below:

The pie, which was specially made by a shop called Ultimate Purveyors in St Helens, was launched to promote the World Pie Eating Championship, which will be held in Wigan on Tuesday.

"This is the first step to enable mankind to consume pies with more elegance and comfort," Bill Kenyon of Ultimate Purveyors, who helped bake the pie, told the BBC ahead of the launch. He added: "Neither the sky, nor the pie, should be the limit."

Fifteens and Fox owner Tony Callaghan told the *Manchester Evening News*:

This pie will be tested to the extreme. It's structural integrity will be tested against the potential rigours of being served by a grumpy pie lady from Wigan or being transported for delivery in a pie van that hits a pothole in Hindley.

"We are aware that scientists have been experimenting with plants on the International Space Station to see if their molecular structure changes, so we are experimenting with pies to see if the structure changes with space travel and allows the pie to be eaten quicker.

According to the organisers, this giant leap for pie-kind reached a height of 29 miles, boldly going where no pastry has been before. 29 miles is well into the "near space" region of the upper stratosphere, but short of the Kármán line at 100km (62 miles) where the Earth's atmosphere fizzles out and "outer space" officially starts.

The entire voyage, which required permission from the Civil Aviation Authority, took around two hours, and it eventually touched down 38 miles from its launch site, near the Forest of Bowland. Organisers have yet to release their analysis of the pie's post-landing structure and consistency.

Contestants at the championships race to scoff a regulation 12cm "competition pie" in the fastest possible time. Martin Appleton Clare, a local furniture salesman, is the current title-holder, and also

holds the all-time speed record, wolfing one pie down in just 22.53 seconds.

It may be the first pie in the sky—but another baked good got there first: Mmmm, pizza.

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Men To Sue Over Drug That Made Them Grow Breasts

5newsonline.com

Posted 11:14 am, December 14, 2016, by CNN Wire

(CNN) — When teenage Eddie Bible looked in the mirror, he didn't see a boy. It was too difficult for him to look past the large breasts on his chest.

"I had bigger boobs than the girls in (high) school," he said. "I thought, 'Am I going to have to get a training bra?"

At 13 years old, Bible was suffering a side effect — not disclosed at the time — of medication he was taking for anxiety and bipolar disorder.

"They put me on this Risperdal. The doctors said, 'Well, Risperdal was helping some.' To me, it didn't really help, because a year and a half later, I had gynecomastia."

Gynecomastia is a condition that causes teen boys or men's breast tissue to grow. Bible and thousands of others are preparing to sue Johnson & Johnson for damages, claiming the company did not disclose this possible side effect in a timely manner.

'I feel like an experiment'

Though it's not uncommon for teen boys to develop some breast tissue during puberty, this is different. This, Bible says, was humiliating.

At first, Bible thought his breasts were a result of weight gain, also something many who take Risperdal go through. So, at least initially, he overlooked it.

"If I knew what the side effects would be of the medication, I would have never taken it," Bible said of Risperdal, which he took in the early 2000's.

Soon after his breasts became noticeable, Bible stopped going outside with his friends. Most days, he'd retreat to his room and play video games to block out the world. When he was forced to go outside to attend school, he had to deal with "the looks," he says.

And, of course, the comments.

"I'd go to the locker room, and people would point and stare," he said.

Psychologically, he says, dealing with the side effects of Risperdal was worse than the bipolar disorder.

"They took advantage of me," Bible, now 26, said of the drug's maker, Johnson and Johnson, and its subsidiary Janssen, which marketed the medication.

"Everybody picking on you for being a boy with boobs. ... It's just ... depressing."

In 2006, after the drug spent more than a decade on the market, available to teens like Bible, the company placed the gynecomastia side effect on Risperdal labels.

For Bible, it was too late.

"Looking back on it, I feel like an experiment," he said.

An 'essential medicine'

In a statement to CNN, Johnson & Johnson said on behalf of Janssen that it considers Risperdal a useful drug, "essential to helping those affected by mental illness. ... Physicians decide how best to treat their patients."

The World Health Organization includes risperidone, the chemical name for Risperdal, on its list of "essential medicines," meaning the drug is "one of the minimum medicines needed for a basic healthcare system."

But since 1994, when J&J put Risperdal on the market, the drug has drawn a significant amount of attention and controversy, beyond undisclosed side effects.

The company has had to pay more than \$2 billion in penalties and settlements to state and government entities as a result of lawsuits relating to Risperdal and two other drugs, as well as civil and criminal complaints over their usage.

In 2013, in one of the largest health care fraud settlements in US history, the Department of Justice said Risperdal and two other Johnson & Johnson drugs were promoted for dementia patients when Risperdal was approved only to treat schizophrenia. This use was not approved as safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration.

"The conduct at issue in this case jeopardized the health and safety of patients and damaged the public trust," said then-Attorney General Eric Holder.

The department also alleged that Janssen promoted the drug for use in children and people with mental disabilities, despite knowing the health risks, and said it was even one of the company's base business goals.

The agency also alleged that Janssen's sales representatives told doctors that they needed to increase their Risperdal prescriptions in order to receive speaking fees for speeches set up by Janssen. Janssen agreed to the settlement and fines.

In a statement, the company blamed the sales representatives.

Responding to accusations that it inappropriately marketed the drug to children, J&J said Janssen "did not direct sales representatives to promote Risperdal for use in children or adolescents, and it did not approve sales materials aimed at treating children or adolescents."

J&J insists, "Risperdal is a safe and effective medication that has helped millions of people live better lives for more than two decades."

'13,000 victims'

The fact that doctors continue to prescribe Risperdal today is concerning for Jason Itkin, a lawyer who represents Eddie Bible and "13,000 victims like him who were injured by the drug."

They are suing J&J for financial damages related to "disfigurement caused by Risperdal."

"Unfortunately, past fines that J&J has already paid did nothing to help those who directly suffered through the bullying and shaming after developing female breasts," Itkin said.

"In the mid-'90s, early 2000s, Johnson & Johnson made a conscious decision that they were going to withhold important information about their drug so that they could essentially increase their profits by selling it to kids," Itkin said. "J&J went out of their way to hurt these kids, and now the information has come to light."

Arturo Carino took Risperdal for a mental illness as a teen, only to develop large breasts. He was so embarrassed by his condition, he left high school after a bullying incident and never graduated. Unable to afford breast reduction surgery, the 23-year-old still suffers from gynecomastia.

"I try to act like they're not there, but every time I look in the mirror, they are," Carino said. "In the car, you hit a bump, and you feel it. Children grab you to try to figure out what you are. If I have this for the rest of my life, I'm probably not going to have a significant other," he said.

Demand to compensate

For Bible, suing J&J won't bring back his past. Nor will it erase the scars from the surgery to remove his breasts. But perhaps, he says, if he can just show those at Johnson & Johnson what the drug did, he could help them understand what he went through.

"I want to tell them to put themselves in my shoes at that age," he said.

In late October, a Philadelphia judge granted a summary judgment in J&J's favor for an outstanding lawsuit related to Risperdal and gynecomastia.

A separate case scheduled to start at the end of October was also resolved.

But money will not stop "the bullying, the shaming, the deformity of being a boy growing female breasts," Itkin said.

Getting J&J to financially compensate victims is one goal for Itkin. But he has another.

"Part two is to hopefully help J&J to find its way back," Itkin said. "I mean, this is a company that's supposed to help people and instead has gone out of their way to hurt kids."

But Johnson & Johnson insists that Risperdal has helped millions and will continue to help many more.

Mercy Healthwatch

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New Clues About 1800s Baby Girl Unearthed Under San Francisco Home

cbslocal.com

SAN FRANCISCO (KPIX 5) — After a home renovation in San Francisco unearthed the casket of a young girl, researchers have learned more about her identity.

Researchers say there are indications that more bodies may be buried in the neighborhood as well.

The mystery of the 2-year-old girl found in a casket buried under a San Francisco home is nearly solved.

Researcher Alex Snyder said is trying to answer a question that surfaced back in May — when a San Francisco home renovation near Rossi Park unearthed the casket of an unidentified young girl.

Who was this girl whose coffin was found about 140 years after she was buried?

Snyder said she was "buried sometime in the 1870s, 80s, 90s, somewhere in that time frame."

The girl was given the name Miranda Eve, and re-buried during a ceremony in Colma.

But since May, a research team has been closing in on the girl's real identity, by piecing together a map of Odd Fellows cemetery, which was emptied and built-over in the 1930s.

Snyder said, "From there it was just a matter of combing through burial records and undertaker records."

And sure enough, they may have found a family connection in one of those burial plots.

Snyder said, "We've identified a really strong candidate, we're just waiting on DNA results."

The only problem is that the candidate comes from a family not listed on any of the official burial records.

"The records for the cemetery weren't that great, and the people who were removing the bodies didn't have good information to work with," Snyder said.

And that raises an interesting possibility. If the burial records were poor, and the people moving the bodies missed at least one casket, just how many more people are still resting beneath this San Francisco neighborhood.

Snyder said, "I think a lot of people were left behind, and I think as times goes on a lot more bodies will turn up."

That remains to be seen, but as for uncovering the real identity of this long-forgotten 2-year-old, that answer may come within days.

Snyder said, "Yeah, we've got a strong candidate and I suspect we will know fairly soon whether or not the candidate we have identified is Miranda Eve."

The family that may be linked to Miranda Eve has not been identified.

We'll let you know when the DNA results are in.

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Pictures from Another Time



Pictures from Another Time

In 1997, a woman named Rita Swift found an old roll of undeveloped film. It had a note attached "taken in our backyard Sep. 1969". Rita took the roll in for developing but the photo lab and, to everyone's amazement, 19 of the 20 pictures developed successfully.

The first 16 pictures were typical photos of Rita's 5-year-old daughter, her cat, her swing set and other normal backyard pictures but pictures 17 through 19 turned out a bit different. As you can see, it appears that these last three pictures which were also taken in the backyard in 1969 display a different event of a time long ago when Indians owned the land.

If real, the images in these pictures would date anywhere from the 17th or 18th century.



Picture #16. A normal picture.



Picture #17

Picture #19

Picture #18





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Pilot uses his FLIGHT PATH to trace out a 300-mile tall Christmas

dailymail.co.uk 13:05 EST, 17 December 2016 |



Now that's a big Christmas tree! Pilot uses his FLIGHT PATH to trace out a 300-mile tall tree spanning three counties

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Unnamed aviator, from Bicester, traced the outline of a huge Christmas tree
- Flight mapped by Stockholm firm Flightradar24

using radar and other data

The Van's RV-9 American two-seat, single-engine plane owned by David Gill took off at Bicester Airfield and flew more than 300 miles in just over an hour

By Rachael Burford For Mailonline

A festive pilot has created one of the UK's strangest Xmas trees - using his plane's 300 mile long flight path.

The unnamed aviator set off from Bicester, Oxon, and traced the outline of a huge Christmas tree by flying across three counties.

The flight was mapped by Stockholm-based firm Flightradar24 using a mix of radar and other data and showed the perfect trace of a Christmas tree outline.



The unnamed aviator set off from Bicester, Oxon, and traced the outline of a huge Christmas tree by flying across three counties



Van's RV-9 American two-seat, single-engine plane (pictured) owned by David Gill took off at Bicester Airfield and flew more than 300 miles in just over an hour

The Van's RV-9 American two-seat, single-engine plane owned by David Gill took off at Bicester Airfield and flew more than 300 miles in just over an hour.

The pilot flew across Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire before returning to Bicester.

The

Staff at Flightradar24 - a global flight tracking service that provides real-time information about thousands of aircraft - spotted the 'drawing.'

They posted a picture of the Christmas tree on its official Twitter account for its 340,000 followers to enjoy.

It was tweeted alongside a 'Merry Xmas' message mapped out by a pilot over in Germany.

People were invited to say which one they preferred.

Flightradar24 tweeted: 'Which pilot is the best virtual painter? Christmas tree - click 'like'



Another pilot in Germany spelled out the words 'Merry Xmas' with his plane

'(For)

Merry Xmas - click 'retweet', (if) Both are great - 'like' & 'retweet'.'

The post was liked nearly 1,000 times and had more than 600 retweets so it looked like the Christmas tree is won the competition.

People also took to Twitter to comment on the 'drawings'.

Josh Fahey said: 'I'm not going to chose either. I think they're both great and lovely gestures.'



Comments ()

The comments below have not been moderated.

Tiggeroo, Birmingham, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

Set off from Bicester in Oxon and flew over Bucks and Northants. Well Dur! You only have to travel about 10 miles to achieve that! Bicester is pretty near the border!

Ex-Pat and Happy, Florida, United States, about 6 hours ago

Why focus on the detail, it's funny.

Eric Pode, Croydon, Antarctica, about 7 hours ago

No way is that 300 miles - Banbury to MK is 30 miles, and to Cold Ashby (the tip of the tree) is 30 miles. So with all the ins and outs, I guess 130 miles, max...

Roger, Luton, United Kingdom, about 8 hours ago

300-mile tall tree eh? It looks like about 25 miles tall to me.

RyanChester, Chester, United Kingdom, about 8 hours ago

Putin's Jets

pikuretov, beaconsfield, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Surely it's 4 counties? Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire? Might even have touched Warwickshire...?

Vectis, IOW, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Yeah, we can all draw a line on Google Maps.

Eric Pode, Croydon, Antarctica, about 7 hours ago

Well, it's on FlightRadar24... I looked it up.

Tony_, London, United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

So it flew 300 miles in just over an hour? An RV9 does 170mph maximum. Do the maths, DM

Mike, Penzance, United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

300 miles in a little over one hour? Don't be daft, a Rans RV9 is a home built aircraft and it's cruising speed is 189mph.

San, Manc, about 10 hours ago

What!

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Police corral 4 suspicious donkeys in New Jersey town

Published: December 14, 2016 — 8:45 AM EST

philly.com

by The Associated Press

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. (AP) - Police in a New Jersey town scrambled after getting a report of four suspicious donkeys loitering behind a home.

The donkeys made a run for it, albeit more of a slow trot, when Mount Laurel officers arrived on the scene Saturday. The officers yelled and used to a patrol car to corral the animals during the slow pursuit.

True to their stubbornness, police say the donkeys did not bray their address. But, the officers managed to return the animals, unharmed, to the enclosure from which they escaped.

News >

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Prenda Law "copyright trolls" Steele and Hansmeier arrested

Lawyers who turned porn lawsuits into big business now face criminal charges.

Joe Mullin - 12/16/2016, 10:13 AM



Aurich Lawson

The two lawyers said to be the masterminds behind Prenda Law, Paul Hansmeier and John Steele, have been arrested and charged with a multimillion-dollar extortion scheme.

The two lawyers were charged Wednesday with an 18-count indictment (PDF), describing allegations of fraud, perjury, and money laundering perpetrated between 2011 and 2014. The charges were unsealed and

announced today and first reported by the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*. Both Hansmeier, 35, and Steele, 45, were arrested earlier today before the indictment was made public.

"The defendants in this case are charged with devising a scheme that casts doubt on the integrity of our profession," said US Attorney Andrew Luger in a statement. "The conduct of these defendants was outrageous—they used deceptive lawsuits and unsuspecting judges to extort millions from vulnerable defendants. Our courts are halls of justice where fairness and the rule of law triumph, and my office will use every available resource to stop corrupt lawyers from abusing our system of justice."

The indictment explains how the defendants "used sham entities to obtain copyrights to pornographic movies—some of which they filmed themselves—and then uploaded those movies to file-sharing websites in order to lure people to download the movies."

Prenda Law sued hundreds of people for copyright infringement, accusing them of illegally downloading pornographic movies. In 2013, US District Judge Otis Wright sanctioned the firm in a Los Angeles case, along with Steele and Hansmeier personally, saying they had perpetrated a fraud on the court. Wright also referred the case to criminal investigators.

"Look, you may hate me": 90 minutes with John Steele, porn troll Wright's damning order set off a domino effect, with Prenda and its affiliated lawyers facing a long series of judicial sanctions and fee orders in courts around the country. Steele and Hansmeier fought many of the sanctions, but earlier this year, panels of appellate judges at both the 7th Circuit and 9th Circuit ruled against them and said they must pay for hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees to defense lawyers who fought their claims.

State Bar investigators took action as well, filing complaints that ended this year with both lawyers having their licenses to practice law suspended. Hansmeier, who built a new legal practice suing small businesses over violations of the Americans With Disabilities Act, filed for bankruptcy last year.

Forgery and identity theft

The basic scheme worked like this: Prenda Law, or one of several attorneys who worked with the firm, would file a copyright lawsuit over illegal downloads against a "John Doe" defendant they knew only by an IP address. They would then use the discovery process to find out subscriber names from the various ISPs around the country. Once they got it, they'd send out letters and phone calls demanding a settlement payment, typically around \$4,000, warning the defendant that if they didn't pay quickly, they would face public allegations over downloading porn.

While mass-copyright lawsuits over mainstream media have been a decidedly mixed bag, Prenda's fast-and-loose porn litigation campaign worked well, at least for a few years. In one interview, John Steele said he'd raked in \$15 million. That might have been an exaggeration. A spreadsheet revealed in court showed that Prenda made \$1.9 million in 2012 alone, and it isn't clear that included all the accounts.

Once a few of those defendants dug in, lawyered up, and investigated Prenda, the lawsuits started to look questionable. Some key documents in Prenda lawsuits were signed by Steele's former housekeeper, Alan Cooper—but Cooper denied it, saying his signature had been forged. As for the porn movies that were the subject of the lawsuits, they weren't exactly big hits. In fact, forensic analysts found that they may have been uploaded to Pirate Bay by Prenda lawyers themselves as a kind of "honeypot" that could produce the profitable lawsuits they wanted.

A scheme unraveled

The indictment says that Prenda was "nominally owned" by an Illinois lawyer identified in the indictment as "P.D.", which seems to refer to Paul Duffy, the former Prenda associate who died in 2015. But the feds say the firm was controlled by Hansmeier and Steele. The two lawyers were also the "de facto" owners of AF Holdings LLC, Ingenuity 13 LLC, Guava LLC, and several other shell companies that held the copyrights to the pornographic movies that Prenda litigated over.

"When Hansmeier and Steele ensnared someone in their trap, they filed false and deceptive copyright infringement lawsuits that concealed their role in distributing the movies, as well as their significant personal stake in the outcome of the litigation," states the indictment.

Then, they subpoenaed the ISPs and "used extortionate tactics to garner quick settlements from individuals who were unaware of defendants' role in uploading the movie, and often were either too embarrassed or could not afford to defend themselves. When these individuals did fight back, the defendants dismissed the lawsuits rather than risk their scheme being unearthed.

After courts stopped Hansmeier and Steele from suing dozens or hundreds of people at a time for copyright infringement, the two men switched to saying their clients' computer systems had been "hacked." When their tactics were questioned, "the defendants repeatedly lied and caused others to lie in order to conceal the true nature of their scheme," the feds allege.

In all, authorities say Hansmeier and Steele caused at least 200 fraudulent lawsuits to be filed and sought subscriber information for more than 3,000 IP addresses based on "spurious allegation[s]."

Perhaps unable to maintain real pornography producers as clients, Hansmeier and Steele started making their own porn in May 2012. They contracted with adult film actresses to make a few short features with odd but innocuous names, like "Five Fan Favorites" and "A Peek Behind the Scenes at the Show." The films were never distributed commercially, instead being uploaded straight to Pirate Bay.

The two are accused of lying in court to cover up their fraud, as well. The indictment details no less than 14 specific lies that were told under oath, such as Steele's April 2015 deposition testimony, in which he said he "did not run or manage in any way AF Holdings," saying it was run by Mark Lutz, a former paralegal who worked with Steele. Lutz, identified only as M.L. in the indictment, was "merely a figurehead to obscure Hansmeier and Steele's control over AF Holdings."

Joe Mullin Joe has covered the intersection of law and technology, including the world's biggest copyright and patent battles, since 2007.

Email joe.mullin@arstechnica.com // **Twitter** @joemullin reader comments 150
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Python and bat locked in battle to the death but... who wins?

07:23 EST, 16 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news. sport. celebrity. science and

health stories

Python and a bat clash in an epic battle for survival but as the killer snake tightens its grip... who wins?

- Flying fox strangled by python in Australian jungle during tense fight for survival
 - Killer snake looks to have control over its prey but bat manages to squirm away
- Flying foxes may exceed a wing span of 1m and in video it uses wings to escape

By Alex Matthews For Mailonline

A python and a bat lock in an epic battle but as the killer snake tightens its grip the fight takes an unexpected twist.

The flying fox is strangled by the python during the tense fight for survival in the Australian jungle, but miraculously squirms its way free.

Using its impressive wings to claw its way out of the snake's killer grip, the fruit bat crawls away from its clutches and seemingly lives to fight another day.

Epic fight! Insane moment a giant bat wins battle over python



A python and a bat lock in an epic battle but as the killer snake tightens its grip the fight takes an unexpected twist

Strangely, instead of attacking its prey again, the snake allows the flying fox to escape without chase.

Flying foxes can be found across Australia, breeding in areas of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Southern Queensland.

The flying fox is strangled by the python during the tense fight for survival in the Australian jungle, but miraculously squirms its way free

Flying foxes have an impressive wingspan that can exceed one metre - an attribute that certainly came in handy for the bat in the video

Strangely, instead of attacking its prey again, the snake allows the flying fox to escape without chase

They have an impressive wingspan that can exceed one metre, an attribute that certainly came in handy for the bat in the video.



The flying fox is seen using his claws to grip on the snake's scales before expanding its wings to loosen the reptiles grip.

It is not known if the bat did survive, as it appears hurt by the powerful grip of the snake as it slowly limps away from the battle.

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Russian reality TV show Game2: Winter to 'allow' rape and murder in Siberia

Beniamin Lee Thursday 15 December 2016

theguardian.com

A new Russian reality show where crimes are "allowed" will begin next year.

Game2: Winter will strand 30 contestants in the -40F (-40C) Siberian wilderness for nine months with the surviving winner receiving a \$1.6m prize. It will stream 24/7 online.

"Each contestant gives consent that they could be maimed, even killed," reads an advert. "2000 cameras, 900 hectares and 30 lives. Everything is allowed. Fighting, alcohol, murder, rape, smoking, anything."

Contestants will each sign a waiver acknowledging that they might be raped or killed but the rules also state that police are free to arrest anyone who commits a crime on the show. "You must understand that the police will come and take you away," the rules state. "We are on the territory of Russia, and obey the laws of the Russian Federation."

Contestants will be placed in a landscape where bears and wolves are likely to be living. According to the Siberian Times, knives will be allowed yet guns are forbidden. The show is the brainchild of entrepreneur Yevgeny Pyatkovsky who says he "will refuse any claim of participants even if they were to be killed or raped".

There won't be a crew but rather 2,000 cameras dotted around the area. Each contestant will also have their own personal recording device. Willing participants need to be 18 and "mentally sane" to compete.

"The show promises to be international," Pyatkovsky said. "Five countries have already expressed the desire to broadcast it for their audiences."

He claims that 60 people have already applied, including one American.

This article was amended on 16 December 2016 to correct a temperature conversion.

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Inside the creepy ghost village tied to a spate of mysterious deaths dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Unexplained suicides, a graveyard site, and a paranormal dragon: The bizarre theories surrounding 'haunted' ghost village built as a seaside holiday resort

 The Sanzhi Pod City in Taiwan was designed as a seaside holiday resort in 1978 but abandoned in

1980

- Construction was abandoned in the wake of a spate of deaths, including mysterious suicides and ca crashes
- A Dutch graveyard lies beneath the site, and construction workers claimed they were haunted by ghosts
- Locals believe the resort was haunted by a paranormal ornament of a dragon destroyed during construction

By Nelson Groom for Daily Mail Australia

Published: 09:19 EST, 17 December 2016 | Updated: 09:39 EST, 17 December 2016

A spate of suicides, a Dutch graveyard, and a paranormal dragon: this is the story of a doomed holiday resort which remains shrouded in mystery.

The UFO shaped would-be holiday homes of Sanzhi Pod City were built in New Taipei City, Taiwan, in 1978 as a seaside holiday resort for US military officers and affluent Taiwanese.

But after construction was abandoned in the wake of several mysterious deaths, the site has become the centre of sinister conspiracy theories and shot to infamy as a dark tourism attraction.

Scroll down for video



The Sanzhi Pod City in Taiwan was designed as a seaside holiday resort in 1978 but abandoned in 1980

Construction on the bizarre UFO shaped would-be holiday homes began in 1978 to be part of a seaside holiday resort

According to locals, a burial ground for Dutch soldiers lies beneath the futuristic designs.

Some of the construction workers claimed they were haunted by ghosts before the site was abandoned, fuelling a theory the spirits did not want their resting place to be disturbed.



• London council proposes £1 a night bed tax on hotels to... Passengers stranded at Heathrow Airport for nearly 12 hours... Saudi Arabian tourists are world's biggest spenders......

Another theory

circulates online that the resort was haunted by an paranormal ornament of a dragon destroyed during construction.

Rumour has it the large concrete dragon was knocked down to make way for the entrance of the pod city, thereby cursing the site.



According to locals a burial ground for Dutch soldiers lies underneath the buildings and the site is haunted

In many Asian cultures, dragons are a symbol of good fortune and success, fuelling speculation the opposite was unleashed when the dragon was destroyed.

They resort was built in 1978 as a vacation destination for US

military officers deployed to the Far East and wealthy Taiwanese.

The buildings were abandoned in 1980 after investment losses by developers Hung Kuo Group and a number of bizarre deaths, including several suicides from construction workers with no signs of depression and mysterious and car accidents.

Apparently, these retro futuristic building styles were popular at that time, but the price was so high that they failed to sell most of the units.

The pod resort was knocked down around 2010 and not a trace of it remains, so the cloud of mystery hanging over the story will likely never be cleared.

An up close look at Taiwan's UFO pod houses

A number of bizarre deaths, including several suicides and car accidents occured during construction

A graffetti-ed and abandoned slide (left) and a small figure sits by a pod (right) in these 2008 photographs





Apparently, these retro futuristic building styles were popular at that time, but the price was so high that they failed to sell most of the units.

Share what you think

The







comments below have not been moderated.

auxpowerunit, Tampa FL, United States, about an hour ago

I've driven past this place before. Just down the road from this is another bunch of abandoned luxury townhouses. Those had very western designs and each unit even had a small dance studio with hardwood plank flooring. I think the reason both of these developments were not successful has to do with cultural preferences. Although westerners like beach-side resorts, the Taiwanese prefer urban life. This location was too remote and lonely for Taiwanese house buyers. A good analogy is our Oregon coast, which is beautiful but rather creepy at night.

Whitelove, YVR, Canada, about 2 hours ago

It's Taiwan

shahco, North Carolina, United States, about 4 hours ago

I would love a pink or purple one near the beach in North or South Carolina. If I'm dreaming big, anywhere in Hawaii.

Ponteelcinturon, Valencia, Spain, about 4 hours ago

Cool. Someone needs to rebuild it. Looks fantastic.

Dosoreality69, NYC, United States, about 5 hours ago

Is it owned and operated by the C ii A ????? ??

Kbcgl, New York, United States, about 5 hours ago

Suite and ca crashes.....ca crashes? Really DM?

Leo the lion, Sydney, Australia, about 7 hours ago

I read this place had been demolished... thats eerie, its back!

Patty Pat, Any City, United States, about 7 hours ago

Just remove all of the 'R's from any sentence and you have the Boston accent down. In Boston, when you fart in a jar while in your parked car, it sounds like "Faat in a jaa while in youaa paaked caa".

Patty Pat, Any City, United States, about 7 hours ago

Sorry, this was supposed to be a reply to a comment below. My bad.

The Big Boot, Nunnayabizzo, Australia, about 6 hours ago

Lol!

null, about 8 hours ago

Just put up a new dragon.

bestflowergirl, geneseo, United States, 35 minutes ago

It would be better if they planted fields of tulips over it!!!!

Richard John Bingham, Auckland, New Zealand, about 9 hours ago

In Taiwan the have podtrash instead of trailertrash.

The views expressed in the contents above are those of our users and do not necessarily reflect the views of MailOnline.

By posting your comment you agree to our house rules.

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Skier may have triggered Pass avalanche

jhnewsandguide.com

Posted: Thursday, December 15, 2016 5:56 pm

Skier may have triggered Pass avalanche By Johanna Love Jackson Hole News&Guide |

Teton Pass will be closed overnight after an avalanche around 4:52 p.m. buried both lanes of Highway 22 under about 20 feet of snow.

WYDOT officials have called Teton County Search and Rescue to probe the snow in case any people were caught in the slide, said Stephanie Harsha, public relations specialist for WYDOT District 3.

"They do believe it was skier triggered," Harsha said. "They're looking into that right now."

Harsha said she had been told the avalanche might have "knocked over a car," but no injuries have yet been reported.

The snow hit the road below the popular Twin Slides ski route.

"They want to make sure they search the area well," Harsha said, and it will take hours to remove all the snow that came down.

"There's also the additional danger of additional slides," Harsha said.

After the hourslong effort of clearing the road, Harsha said, WYDOT technicians will re-evaluate the road closure Friday morning.

Contact Johanna Love at 732-7071 or features@jhnewsandguide.com. Follow on Twitter @JHNGfeatures.

Posted in Town county on Thursday, December 15, 2016 5:56 pm.

2

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bbc.com

The mystery of the stolen Klimt

By Max Paradiso Piacenza

- 8 December 2016
- From the sectionMagazine

http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-38242917



In today's Magazine

Nearly 20 years ago a valuable portrait was stolen, in bizarre circumstances, from a gallery in the northern Italian city of Piacenza. Until recently there appeared to be little prospect of it ever being recovered - but then police received some perplexing new information, and they now think it will be back in the city within weeks or months.

Carabiniere Sgt Maj Salvatore Cavallaro was on a ladder looking out on to the roof of Piacenza's Ricci-Oddi gallery through a partially open skylight.

"It doesn't fit," he shouted to his colleagues below, as he compared the size of a heavy gilded frame on the roof beside the skylight with the the thief could have fished the painting from up here."

narrow opening. "No way the thief could have fished the painting from up here."

You could just about imagine that a thief on the roof had hooked the frame on a line, and pulled it up to the ceiling - but that would have been no use. This was clearly not the exit through which the portrait by the Viennese turn-of-the-century artist Gustav Klimt had left the building.

So why, on 22 February 1997, was the frame on the roof?

Ten months earlier the Portrait of a Lady had been involved in a drama of a different kind, thanks to a sharp-eyed 18-year-old art student, Claudia Maga.

While flipping through The Complete works of Gustav Klimt she had noticed a strong resemblance between The Lady and another Klimt painting, Portrait of a Young Lady, that had not been seen since 1912.

"The Young Lady had a scarf and a hat but they both had in common the same glance over the left shoulder, the same smile and the same beauty spot on the left cheek," Maga says.

She had photocopied and enlarged the two small photographs in the book, had drawn the profile of the Young Lady on tracing paper and put it on top of The Lady.

"And that was it," she says. "The Lady was concealing another portrait beneath it, the only double portrait Klimt has ever painted."

Claudia Maga describes her discovery

Media captionClaudia Maga describes her discovery

Maga got the gallery's former director, Ferdinando Arisi, interested in her theory. A few weeks later he picked her up from art school, drove her to the gallery, and removed the portrait from its frame. Wrapping it in brown paper they headed for the local hospital, where sure enough a series of X-rays revealed the dim shadow of the earlier work beneath the surface.

The story behind the painting was the next surprise. Klimt had fallen madly in love with a young girl from Vienna, it was said, who had quickly become his muse. Then, when she suddenly died, he painted over her portrait to forget the pain of his loss.



Piacenza was in ecstasy.

A special exhibition was arranged to show off the painting in a new location close to the city hall. At the same time, the gallery was to be renovated, and many paintings started to be packed and moved into storage. Workers were coming and going. And when the Klimt itself went missing, no-one immediately realised. The gallery staff assumed it had been removed deliberately as part of the preparations for the new exhibition.

The painting looked convincing, but the smell of the oil paint was fresh...

Portrait of a Young Lady Then we received a phone call from the gallery," Sergeant Cavallaro says. "They muttered, 'We can't find The Lady."

When he arrived on the scene, he says, "The doors of the gallery were open, people were going in and out, and the security system was switched off."

Faced with the mysterious theft and no leads, the police were stumped. They asked a notorious local art thief for advice, but even he was unable to put them on the right track.

Little progress had been made when, on 1 April 1997, border police intercepted a package on the Italian/French frontier at Ventimiglia. It was addressed to the former Italian PM Bettino Craxi, who was at the time hiding from the law in Hammamet, Tunisia. When they opened it, they found a Klimt.

Stefano Fugazza the then director of the Ricci-Oddi gallery thought it was an April Fool's joke, but Arisi, his predecessor, was optimistic and keen to get to Ventimiglia straight away.

"We drove madly to Ventimiglia," Fugazza writes in his diaries, "but the only thing we came back with was a speeding ticket."

The painting looked convincing, but the smell of the oil paint was fresh. It wasn't the original, it was a high-quality forgery.

Image copyright Liberta Image caption

There is another strange paragraph in Fugazza's diary.



Stefano Fugazza with Claudia Maga and the Portrait of a Lady before the theft

Days before the painting disappeared, he writes, he had contemplated the idea of talking to the carabinieri and, with their permission, pretending that the portrait had been stolen, in order to draw more attention to the forthcoming exhibition.

"But now The Lady has gone for good," he adds, "and damned be the day I even thought of such a foolish and childish thing."

Soon afterwards Cavallaro was assigned to other work and the case was closed.



Gustav Klimt, with cat

Image copyright Alamy Image caption

It remained closed until 2013, when the carabinieri made a fresh attempt to

identify a fragment of a fingerprint found on the frame - in vain, as it turned out.

But last summer a local journalist arranged a meeting between the new carabiniere investigator, Col Luca Pietranera, and an art thief he had got to know in one of Piacenza's many bars. And the thief turned out to be a mine of information.

The thief told the colonel that he was the man the original investigators had asked for advice, back in February 1997, as they searched for the perpetrator of the theft. He then confessed that he was, in fact, the man who had carried out the theft and left the gilded frame on the roof as a coup de theatre.

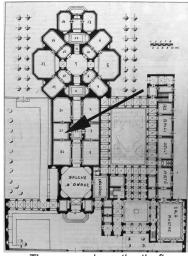
Then he explained that what he had stolen that day was in fact a copy.

Image caption

So what had happened to the real painting?

"Oh well, I stole it months before anybody had noticed," the now elderly thief proudly tells me, when we meet in a cafe in Piacenza.

A few months after the discovery of the double Klimt, around November 1996, he just walked into the gallery and replaced the original with a copy, he says.



The room where the theft occurred

"Nobody blinked, nobody noticed. It was an easy and carefully planned inside job."

He is now helping the carabinieri with their inquiries into a number of crimes, in return for immunity from prosecution.

But why was it necessary to steal the copy, I ask the chain-smoking thief.

This was done, he says, to hide the fact that it was a copy. The special exhibition would doubtless have brought Klimt experts from far and wide, one of whom would surely have spotted it was a fake - and this might have been disastrous for the gallery insider who had assisted with the theft.



The Ricci-Oddi gallery

Image copyright Ferruccio Ceriati

But the thief's most startling claim is that the painting will be returned by the 20th anniversary of the theft (or more accurately, the theft of the copy). In other words, by February next year.

How he can know this is unclear. After all, by his own account, the painting was long ago sold by a dealer for a large quantity of cash and cocaine. But he confidently makes this prediction - and the carabinieri say he may well be correct.

They are currently in contact with police in another European country where the painting is thought to be held in a private collection.

The only thing they are not completely sure of is whether the painting they are now on the trail of is the original, or a copy. This, they say, they will only be able to confirm when they have it in their hands.

Where are the copies?

- The forgery that hung, unnoticed, in the gallery for three months is lost it is described by the art thief as "high-quality" and is believed to have had two layers, like the original, with the Lady painted over the Young Lady
- Carabinieri assume the forgery found by border police in Ventimiglia is somewhere in the basement of the Ricci-Oddi gallery it is also thought to be a double portrait
- When the gallery held a news conference to announce the results of the fruitless Ventimiglia escapade, they displayed a poor-quality copy of the portrait, which is now held by police in Bologna

• Another poor-quality replica surfaced in a second-hand shop in Piacenza

Join the conversation - find us on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter.

Image copyright Ferruccio Ceriati

The 'Rainbow People' who meet around the world for NAKED gatherings

dailymail.co.uk



The 'Rainbow People' who meet around the world for meditations and NAKED gatherings where they 'express their love for each other'

.com

WARNING: CONTAINS IMAGES OF NUDITY
A series of images show scenes from annual

Rainbow Gatherings, which are held around the world

- Hundreds of people join the events, which promote a life free of consumerism
- They were taken by photographer Denis Vejas, who described it as a 'beautiful social experiment'

By Dave Burke For Mailonline

Published: 06:14 EST, 16 December 2016 | Updated: 15:54 EST, 16 December 2016

Fascinating pictures give a unique insight into what happens when hundreds of people shed their clothes and show each other unconditional love at festivals around the world.

Photographer Denis Vejas has travelled to Rainbow Gatherings in Mexico, Guatemala, Morocco and Russia.

The annual festivals are attended by loosely-knit communities, who gather in forests and remote places to be at one with nature and promote a life free of consumerism.



A couple enjoy an intimate moment at a Rainbow Gathering, where hundreds of attendees gather to be at one with nature

People gathered at a Rainbow Gathering, where they relax in a river as they celebrate unconditional love and freedom

A young woman covered in mud at a Rainbow Gathering event, which promote freedom and unconditional love

A moment of solace for a woman at one of the gatherings, which have been photographed by Denis Vejas



• Don't worry, just a few more miles to go! Cabbie of the year... Mar-shell arts: Tortoises battle it out at safari park... The adorable rescue dog with a hiccup instead of a bark ¿...

Among the images are scenes of naked attendees relaxing in rivers and on banks, while others show them

as they decorate their faces, meditate and smoke drugs.









The 30-year-old Lithuanian photographer said: 'Nomadic and alternative lifestyle is a big part of my photography and rainbow gatherings are a big part of nomadic culture and I felt I needed to document it.

'Unconditional love is a beautiful social experiment, especially when it is practiced by hundreds of people at the same time.

Denis said: 'It's an attempt to build a different world without authorities and organisations where you can be absolutely free without the need to explain'

Participants at the free-to-attend festivals take part in a range of activities including meditation, dancing, yoga and playing music

People meditating on a beach at a Rainbow Gathering festival, where photographer Denis Vejas has captured a series of stunning images

'It's an attempt to build a different world without authorities and organisations where you can be absolutely free without the need to explain.

'Gatherings attract same-minded people, so there is no one to shock.

'They happen in different parts of the world and usually in the outskirts of the countryside so the only contact with the outside world is some random small local village.

He said: 'They happen in different parts of the world and usually in the outskirts of the countryside so the only contact with the outside world is some random small local village'

Close-knit communities at the festivals gather in forests and remote places to be at one with nature and promote a life free of consumerism

Attendees are seen holding hands in a circle one of the festivals, which are held annually to promote unconditional love and peace

'In most of the cases, rainbow people sustain a very friendly relationship with the neighbours and locals often come to play music by the bonfire or eat together.'

The first Rainbow Gathering took place in 1972 in Colorado, and similar events are now held all over the world.

Participants at the free-to-attend festivals take part in a range of activities including meditation, dancing, yoga and playing music.

Denis said: 'I love honest and uncensored photography. I am attracted to communities that are born on the edges of global culture.'

The series of photos were taken at Rainbow Gatherings in Mexico, Guatemala, Morocco and Russia







Hundreds of people head to the gatherings, which have become worldwide events since the first was held in Colorado in 1972

An intimate moment between two people at one of the festivals, where attendees cut contact with the outside world

Photographer Denis Vejas (pictured) has travelled to Rainbow Gatherings in Mexico, Guatemala, Morocco and Russia









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America's biggest shopping mall grabbed headlines this week by hiring its first African-American Father Christmas. But black Santas have been around for a lot longer than you might think - and even played a role in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

"Everything that Santa represents has to be you. That's my honest belief. You can't have some grumpy old guy who doesn't love kids sitting there representing somebody who is joyful, somebody who is loving."

Kenny Green is a man who takes his job seriously.

He has been playing Santa Claus for the past five years and although the mall where he works, in a suburb of Washington DC, has hosted a black Santa for as long as anyone can remember, he says they are still "few and far between" in the rest of America.

African-American families come from as far afield as Delaware, 80 miles away, to visit his grotto, at the Shops at Iverson mall.

Which is why, he says, it was "huge" that the Mall of America - the country's biggest indoor shopping complex - decided to hire a black Santa for the first time this year.



Larry Jefferson was the Mall of America's first black Santa Claus

Image copyright AP Image caption

The Minnesota shopping centre hired Larry Jefferson at a Santa convention in Missouri, where among more than 1,000 attendees he was the only African-American.

He only appeared at the Mall of America for one weekend but it was still enough to spark racist abuse on message boards.

In the overheated post-election atmosphere, Santa Claus is seen by some as another cherished cultural institution under attack by the forces of political correctness. The traditional image of Santa, as a jolly, rotund, and white, character is deeply embedded in American culture.

"Going to a department store, sitting on Santa's lap, all of that, is very central to a certain kind of post-war, white middle-class identity," says Prof Victoria Wolcott, a history professor at the University of Buffalo, who writes about segregation.

"To challenge that, by having a Santa Claus of colour, disturbs people."

It appears to have been disturbing people for more than a century, judging from local newspaper reports about "negro Santas", which tend to veer from an amused "whatever next" tone to examples of flat-out racism.

Santa's origin story

Image caption

- The Santa Claus legend can be traced back to a fourth century monk named St Nicholas who lived in what is today Turkey
- The modern image of Santa Claus was created in the late 1800s by American artist Thomas Nast in a series of cartoons for Harper's Weekly magazine
- It became a staple of Christmas cards and advertising images in the early 20th Century, most notably a 1930s Coca-Cola commercial, which some believe popularised his distinctive red-and-white garb

"A negro Santa Claus went down a chimney head first and landed on the fire," A 1901 news report, from Bloomfield, New Jersey, read. "The surprised occupants of the room flogged him."

Other reports from the time tell of Christmas parties enlivened by "black-face" Santas, singing "negro melodies".

In 1915, a gushing account of President Wilson's honeymoon at a Virginia resort included a description of a festive party "presided over by a dusky Santa Claus", with a large "gaily decorated" Christmas tree.

"Before [the tree] disported 15 negroes, whose antics and musical efforts kept the President and everybody else almost convulsed with laughter."

Four years later, the Pittsburgh Daily Post carried a report about the "the first negro Santa ever put on the streets of any city". He had been hired by the Volunteers of America in response to "appeals from poor coloured children", the newspaper added.

But the real breakthrough for black Santas came in 1936, when tap-dancing legend Bill "Bojangles" Robinson became Harlem's "first negro Santa Claus" at an annual Christmas Eve party for underprivileged children.

In previous years, the children had been visited by a "Nordic Santa" from downtown New York, reported a local newspaper.



Image copyright Getty Images Image caption

In 1943, one of Harlem's biggest department stores, Blumstein's, hired its first black Santa Claus. It was followed, in 1946, by a store in Chicago.

As white people moved out to the suburbs, and began shopping at the giant new malls that were being built there, it made economic sense for downtown department store owners to tailor the Christmas shopping experience to their now mainly black customers.

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson as Santa Claus By the 1960s, Santa had been recruited by the civil rights movement, which was starting to use economic boycotts as a weapon in the fight for racial equality.

York store.

In 1969, Santa Claus was described as "one of the established symbols of racism" by a civil rights leader, in a dispute with Shillittoes, a Cincinnati department store, that refused to hire a black Father Christmas.

The store owner's Fred Lazarus III said: "This has nothing to do with equality of employment. It just doesn't fit the symbol as kids have known it."



Image copyright Alamy Image caption

But the Rev Otis Moss Jr, a regional director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, hit back, saying: "If a department store cannot conceive of a black man as Santa Claus for 30 days, it most assuredly cannot conceive of his being president or vice president for 365 days."

The store caved in and hired a black Santa the following year, something that began happening with increasing frequency across the country in "Father Christmas" represented in a Coca Cola advert from 1959 the early 1970s, including at Macy's flagship New

One department store in Brooklyn even set up rival black-and-white Santas, separated by a low partition, to enable people to make their choice.

At the Iverson mall, Kenny Green is fully suited up and in character, dispensing Christmas cheer to his young fans.

Shameka Pettus, whose two youngest children, Christopher and Jonathan, can hardly contain their excitement at meeting their Yuletide idol, says: "When I was a kid we only had white Santas so this is pretty cool to see a black Santa in the mall for the kids."

But she adds: "I don't think the colour matters. Santa is Santa."



Kenny Green is the latest in a long line of black Santas at the Iverson mall

and the spirit you represent."

Image caption

Green says even some African-American people have difficulty with a black Santa, recalling some "shocking" comments made by one woman last year, who told one of his elves Santa should be white.

But he adds: "When it comes to the spirit of Christmas and what the spirit of Santa is all about, it's not about race, it's not about white or black, it's about the love you have

He says the Mall of America's black Santa will "open a lot of eyes" and could lead to an "influx" of Santas from all different ethnic backgrounds, not just African American.

"I would definitely take my children to go see an Hispanic Santa. I would definitely take my children to go see an Asian Santa," he says.

"Because that's letting them know that Santa is a representation of all of us. That's who we should be. We all should be Santas. We all should have Santa in our heart and in our spirit."

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Live TV

By Steven Visser, CNN

Updated 10:43 PM ET, Sat December 17, 2016



The large tree fell at Penn Park in Whittier.

Story highlights

The eucalyptus tree falls as the wedding party was taking pictures

California's drought may have played a role, fire officials say

(CNN) — A large tree fell on a wedding party in Whittier, California, Saturday afternoon, killing one person and injuring at least five, the Los Angeles County Fire Department said.

Witnesses told CNN affiliate KTLA the wedding party was taking photos when the tree came crashing down in Penn Park.

One witness described the tree as splitting in two and hitting several people, the television station reported.

A birthday party apparently was also taking place nearby in the busy park, KTLA reported.

Fire officials told CNN affiliate KABC that most of the injuries were minor that one was "moderate."

The fallen tree was a eucalyptus, and officials said while its weakness could be linked to the California drought, there were no indications that trees in the area were vulnerable to falling, the television station reported.

Witness Gilbert Duran said on Facebook that he was attending a birthday party in the park when the tree fell.

He said he and some friends were under the tree taking photographs shortly before it fell, but moved to a different location for better light.

That's when the wedding party moved under the tree, he said.

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Live TV

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UPS delivers assault rifle instead of toy for Christmas gift

yahoo.com

OCEANSIDE, N.Y. (AP) — A New York couple was horrified when a UPS delivery that they thought was a Christmas present turned out to be an assault rifle.

Newsday reports (http://nwsdy.li/2gl9lsO) that Joel Berman opened the keyboard-sized case in front of his wife and 6-year-old granddaughter Wednesday night in Oceanside, on Long Island.

Instead of a toy plane they were buying for their friend's son, they found a semi-automatic rifle, scope, stand, ammo clip and copies of an Arizona man's driver's license and concealed-weapons permit.

They hustled their granddaughter out of the room and called police, who picked up the weapon.

Atlanta-based UPS says it's investigating the "highly unusual incident." The company says it accepts legal shipments of some firearms. It says shippers must meet certain requirements.

This story has been corrected to show that the plane was a present for a friend's son, not for the granddaughter.

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Watch as a sheep rampages through a house before pooing in the back garden

By Annie Butterworth 12:55, 16 DEC 2016 Updated 12:55, 16 DEC 2016 News

dailyrecord.co.uk

Watch as woman tries to deal with scary sheep that rampages through her house before pooing in the back garden

Lesley Purcell tried to get rid of the rogue animal but had to enlist the help of a neighbour to finally get it out of her house.



Hilarious footage has captured the moment a sheep goes on the rampage through a home - before relieving itself in the back garden.

Lesley Purcell, from Port of Menteith, Stirling, couldn't believe her eyes when one of the woolly animals took up residence in her countryside house yesterday.

The rogue sheep stayed for over an hour inside the 32-year-old sales

worker's home before it was eventually coaxed out.

The incredible footage shows the 80kg animal stamping its hooves and moving through the house before eventually leaving through the back door - only to defecate on Lesley's decking.

Even then the sheep didn't go quietly, breaking some plant pots and ramming the front door before it had enough and returned to its field.



The near two-minute clip starts as Lesley opens her front door and a loud bang can be heard as she discovers the sheep standing in her hallway staring back at her as if to say: 'what do you want?'

Lesley says: "Come on then, out," before the sheep stamps one of its hoofs on the carpet which says 'home' as she again pleads with it to leave, saying: "Out we get."

The next hilarious shot shows the sheep standing by the sink in her kitchen as both her and her neighbour try to move it.

The bold farm animal just stares back at them, quite content in its unfamiliar surroundings, before Lesley's neighbour gets it to move out the back door.

Things go from bad to worse once it's outside however, as the sheep takes the opportunity to take a number two on the decking as Lesley says: "I'm glad it never did that in my kitchen."

The sheep then knocks over a plant pot before the clip eventually ends.

Speaking about her bizarre experience, Lesley said: "I was out in the back garden and I saw it near my neighbour's. It must have sneaked into my house after I left the gate slightly open.

"It was in my kitchen for over an hour. I got my neighbour to come and help but he was struggling as well. It wasn't easy.



"We eventually got it out the back door but we had to get chairs and all sorts of things to try and guide it out.

"It did break a few plant pots and our chiminea but I couldn't stay angry for too long. It was cute and it's just one of these things.

"The sheep usually stay in the back field but we've never had one in the house before. The cows get pretty close but never the sheep."

Sheep are flock animals, preferring to stay in large numbers which makes this runaway's behaviour even more unusual.

They are frequently thought of as low-intelligence animals however a recent study reported them to be just below pigs in IQ levels.

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Why Hanukkah isn't the 'Jewish Christmas' and other facts about the holiday

Maria Polletta , The Republic | azcentral.com

azcentral.com



Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky of Beth El Congregation in Phoenix talks about Hanukkah, its proximity to Christmas, and gift-giving traditions. Tom Tingle/azcentral.com

'As wonderful a holiday as it is and as joyous, it is not to be compared in holiness to other days in the Jewish calendar,' Phoenix Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky said.



Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky

Hanukkah and Christmas both emphasize lights, miracles, family time and food.

This year, they even begin within hours of each other.

But as tempting as it might be for some to consider Hanukkah the "Jewish Christmas," the moniker is inaccurate and borderline insulting, according to religious scholars.

After all, they say, the whole point of the holiday is to salute Jews' unwillingness to convert or conform.

"Hanukkah ... reminds us of the military victory of the Israelites, the Hasmonean family, over the Greco-Syrians," said Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky, from Beth El Congregation in Phoenix.

The Greco-Syrians tried to force Jews to assimilate and forget Jewish traditions and teachings.

"The Jews fought back. They revolted. And miraculously, against all odds, they won," Lavinsky said.

"While I believe most Jews appreciate the beauty of Christmas for their Christian neighbors, there is something important and even sacred about Jews saying, 'But we celebrate Hanukkah, because this is our holiday.' "

The "Jewish Christmas" misnomer is just one misconception about Hanukkah, which begins Dec. 24 at sundown this year.

Here is a look at eight others.

Hanukkah is often referred to as the "Festival of Lights," but that's not its literal meaning.



The word "Hanukkah" translates to "dedication." It refers to the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem following the revolt.

"When they liberated the temple that had been violated and defiled, they found only one cruse, or bottle, of oil that was enough to last for one day," Lavinsky said. "Miraculously, it lasted for eight."

What you probably know as a "menorah" is actually a "hanukiah."



What many people know as a "menorah" is a "hanukiah." It is used for Hanukkah and holds nine candles.

A hanukiah, the type of

(Photo: Michael Chow/The Republic)

candelabrum specifically used for Hanukkah, has nine branches.

The menorahs used in synagogues year-round typically have fewer branches.

Hanukiahs hold eight candles at one level, representing the eight days of the miracle. The "attendant" candle, used to light the others, is usually elevated.

Candles are placed right to left in the hanukiah, then lit left to right. Families light one candle on the first night of Hanukkah, two on the second and so on.

"In certain Jewish communities, sometimes it will just be the head of the household who will light the hanukiah," Lavinsky said. "There are other traditions where everyone in the family has one of their own to light."

Families generally use oil or candle hanukiahs for the nightly lighting. But many also purchase electric menorahs to place by a front window to "advertise the fact that there was a miracle," Lavinsky said.

The 'one-to-eight' candle-lighting method wasn't a given.

Shammai and Hillel, two sages who led opposing schools of Jewish thought, argued over how it should be done thousands of years ago.

"Shammai felt that, because the oil diminished over the eight days, you should start with eight candles and work your way down," Lavinsky said. "Hillel felt you should start with one and work your way up to eight.

"Hillel's rationale, which we now follow, was that you always ascend in holiness, always strive to go upwards," he said. "I think that's a wonderful spiritual lesson for people of all faiths."

The miracle of Hanukkah does not appear in the Hebrew Bible.

"This holiday is rabbinically ordained, meaning it was established by rabbis," Lavinsky said.

"Interestingly, it is found in the Book of Maccabees in the Christian Bible, but not in the Jewish canon," he said.

Hanukkah might be the most well-known Jewish holiday, but it's not the most important one.



(Photo: Tom Tingle/The Republic)

Rabbi Arthur Lavinsky of Beth El Congregation in Phoenix says Hanukkah is a minor holiday on the Jewish calendar.

Technically, Hanukkah is a "minor" holiday with minimal religious restrictions.

"As wonderful a holiday as it is and as joyous, it is not to be compared in holiness to other days in the Jewish calendar like Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, or Yom Kippur, the day of atonement," Lavinsky said.

Hanukkah's "proximity to Christmas in the general culture often thrusts it into the limelight, whereas it may not be so important on its own," he said.

And Hanukkah "certainly cannot compare in terms of the emphasis that Christmas has at this time of the year."

Potato pancakes aren't the only traditional Hanukkah food.

Many people think of latkes as the end-all, be-all Hanukkah snack.

But jelly-filled doughnuts known as sufganiyot and other fried sweets often make an appearance, too.

Some bakeries sell twists on traditional sufganiyot, filling them with dulce de leche or replacing powdered sugar with a more decadent topping.

"It's a holiday that celebrates oil," Lavinsky said. "Judaism has an affinity for cholesterol, and this is a holiday that adds to it."

Dreidels don't look the same everywhere.



(Photo: Republic file photo)

The four Hebrew letters on a dreidel are different depending on whether it is from Israel or elsewhere.

Outside of Israel, the four Hebrew letters on the sides of the spinning tops form an acronym for "Nes gadol haya sham," or "A great miracle happened there."

In Israel, the last letter is changed to make "A great miracle happened here."

Adults use the dreidel game, a simple one of chance, to engage children in the Hanukkah celebrations.

Each player takes a turn spinning the top. When it stops, the letter facing up determines whether a player must give to or take from the pot.

The pot can include anything from chocolate coins known as gelt to nuts, figs or marbles, Lavinsky said.

"It could also have real money," he said, "but most people find it better to use candy than have their kids gamble."

Gift-giving isn't a traditional part of Hanukkah.

The custom took root in the last century.

Though Lavinsky joked about Jews feeling a need to "keep up with Joneses," he said the addition isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Cultures tend to borrow from one another," he said, mentioning Judaism's influence on the Christian rite of baptism.

"That's one of the great things about not being ghettoized (segregated)," he said. "When we live among other people, we are able to pick the finest of their traditions and sometimes emulate them."

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Two boys at care home 'were murdered and buried in a golf course'

08:51 EST, 18 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

- Raymond Stevenson was former resident at home run by borough of Lambeth
- His report claims to have identified 60 alleged paedophiles at Shirley Oaks home; 700 people say they were abused there between 1950s and 1980s
- Mr Stevenson is now looking into allegations regarding murder of two boys
- Rtd DCI Clive Driscoll received same information from different source in 1998

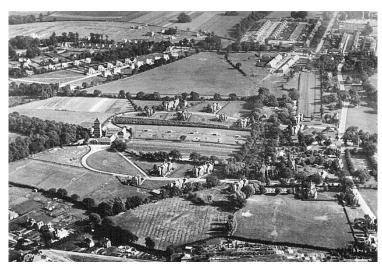
By Nick Enoch for MailOnline

Two boys were murdered at a London care home and their bodies buried in a nearby golf course, the author of a report into paedophile abuse has claimed.

The 130-page report by Raymond Stevenson claims to have identified 60 alleged paedophiles at the Shirley Oaks care home, run by the borough of Lambeth in Croydon.

Now, Mr Stevenson, who is a former resident of the care home, has revealed he is looking into an allegation concerning the two boys.

Retired DCI Clive Driscoll, who led an investigation into suspected abuse in Lambeth, confirmed he received the same information from a different source in 1998.



Two boys were murdered at Shirley Oaks (pictured) care home in South London and their bodies buried in a nearby golf course, the author of a report into paedophile abuse has claimed

The Shirley Oaks Survivors Association (Sosa), founded by Mr Stevenson, represents 700 people who say they were abused at the home between the 1950s and 1980s. Its finding follow its own two-year investigation.

'Every tip that we have receive we cross-check and clarify as much as possible, at this stage I don't know how credible this claim is but we are taking it seriously,' Mr Stevenson told the Daily Express.

'We have established the identities of two possible boys and are now working to find out if they could be the victims. The Met have our report and know what we are doing and in due course we will pass on any further information to them if relevant,' he added.

Mr Driscoll said a female witness told him about the alleged double murder and he forwarded the allegation to the child protection team at Croydon CID.

Mr Stevenson's report has also claimed to have exposed a cover-up by Lambeth Council, which destroyed 140 care records during the mid-1990s despite legislation stating records must be kept for a further 70 years.

Campaigner Lucia Hinton (left), Lib Peck of Lambeth Council (second left), Shirley Oaks Survivors Association founder Raymond Stevenson (third left), former Shirley Oaks resident Shayne Donnelly (third right), MP for West Norwood Helen Hayes (second right) and MP for Streatham Chuka Umunna (right) pose for a photograph before the report's unveiling

The report also claims 48 children died in Lambeth's care system between 1970 and 1989.

Mr Stevenson told a press conference in central London: 'I can tell you the abuse happened on an industrial scale.



'The physical abuse was damaging mentally - being locked in coal sheds, in cupboards, over years, what that does to a young mind is it makes you angry.'

Payout to former Shirley Oaks residents could run to £60m

Tens of millions of pounds are expected to be paid to former residents of Shirley Oaks.

The council has accepted liability for abuse carried out there and said ex-residents would be paid - whether or not they were abuse victims.

Lambeth Council leader Lib Peck said the report

detailed 'abuse on an industrial scale' but that this is not currently the case for children in its care.

She said: 'This report shines a light on a period of Lambeth's history that is very, very dark indeed and I feel ashamed in any way to be associated with - just because I am the current council leader.

'As the leader it falls to me make a full and genuine apology to all of you for the abuse you suffered because of the failings in the care system that you experienced.

'Lambeth should have been protecting you. Lambeth actually denied you that protection and worse.'

She added: 'Going forward, our commitment has to be around working with Sosa to develop a compensation scheme that is fair, that is speedy and that is generous.'

Council chief executive Sean Harriss said officials 'do not know yet how many people will come forward under the scheme', and that levels of compensation will depend on the type of abuse they suffered.

Mr Stevenson said: 'Lambeth Council has said the compensation could run to £50-60million.'

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The £100,000 bath that's dripping in gold (but taps aren't included!) dailymail.co.uk



The £100,000 bath that's dripping in gold (but taps aren't included!) 24-carat tub described as 'ultimate status symbol' is also adorned with 250,000 clear and topaz crystals

- A shimmering 24-caret gold bath with more than 250,000 crystals is the 'ultimate status symbol'
- The taps might not be included in the £100,000 price tag but delivery is free to anywhere in the UK
- Designer Celia Sawyer said her client wanted something over the top but the piece wasn't tacky

By Mark Palmer for the Daily Mail

Published: 17:00 EST, 18 December 2016 | Updated: 19:00 EST, 18 December 2016

Struggling to come up with an extra special Christmas present for a loved one?

Well, here's a thought – a shimmering 24 carat gold bath with more than 250,000 clear and topaz crystals that cascade down the sides in a creation described by its designer as the 'ultimate status symbol' and 'opulence gone mad.'

Just as long as you've got a spare £100,000 to cover the cost (taps not included) - although there's free delivery to anywhere in the UK.



Celia Sawyer has designed what could be the most expensive bath ever, made of 24-caret gold and covered in crystals

The bath costs £100,000 and doesn't even include taps, but delivery is free to anywhere in the United Kingdom

Miss Sawyer, 50, was commissioned to create the 'over-the-top' bath tub but says it is not tacky. She said bling is here to stay

Miss Sawyer said her client probably won't even use the bath as he has several in bathrooms

across his extensive home already

One has been snapped up by a man from the Middle East whose identity is being kept a secret – but place your order now and yours should be gift-wrapped and ready by this time next year.

'My client wanted something a little over the top but I don't think you can call this tacky,' said the self-styled Queen of Bling, Celia Sawyer, of Channel 4 programme Four Rooms, whose clients mainly include premier league footballers, Arabs and Russians. 'It's stylish.'



Miss Sawyer, 50, saw the completed tub this week for the first time in the Epping studio of Robert Grace, who specialises in gold leaf mosaics for what he calls 'superluxury sanitary ware'.

'I am absolutely thrilled with it,' she said.

'Bling is here to stay. People just love it and I try to capture a lot of what I do by the way I look - in other words, expensive.'

 All I want for Christmas is bling! Mariah Carey insists... Is this the most bling-filled party pad in Britain? A £16m... Myleene Klass oozes sophistication as she shows off her...

That's certainly true. In addition to shiny Versace heels, Sawyer was wearing a huge Alexander McQueen skull ring, Butler & Wilson necklace with gold tassels, Fendi bracelet, Rolex watch, extra-long false eyelashes and plunging red dress that left little to the imagination in the décolletage department.

Miss Sawyer with Robert Grace, an interior





decorator, who specialises in gold leaf mosaics for what he calls 'super-luxury sanitary ware'.

Mr Grace, pictured left admiring his handiwork, said bathrooms are becoming the most important room in the house and people love to show them off, which they can certainly do with this tub

The crystals create a 'foam' which is cascading over the sides of the bath. It's made from yellow gold, lemon gold and white gold as well as clear and topaz crystals

Mr Grace, whose team of three craftsmen made the bath from yellow gold, lemon gold and white gold, described it as a 'tactile synthesis of colour' and said the market for one-off 'masterpieces' of this kind is growing in Britain.





'Bathrooms have become the most important room in the house and people love to show them off,' he said . 'It's all about vanity and when you can amaze your friends with something like this then it's job done. You've made your point.'

Miss Sawyer, a former dental nurse who now stars in Channel 4's Four Rooms interiors show and designs

yachts and private jets, is coy about naming her clients – although she did take on a commission from football manager Harry Redknapp, who is a neighbour in Sandbanks on the Dorset coast. And Cesc Febregas, the Chelsea player, hired her when designing his house in Hampstead, North London.

'I just believe that as you get older you should keep dressing up and not let yourself go,' said Sawyer. 'And then surround yourself with the priciest things



you can afford.'

Clearly the person paying £100,000 for this bath believes in keeping up appearances – but Sawyer has one concern.

'He's already got dozens of bathrooms in his home and so I'm not even sure if he will use it as a bath. Still, it will be a nice bauble – especially at Christmas.'



Comments (182

The comments below have not been moderated.

Dhillon, London, United Kingdom, less than a minute ago

Most expensive bathtub (to date) is \$1.7m!

rmd.wien, vienna, Austria, about a minute ago

Got one but had to return it, couldn't get it in my bathroom.

Kitty103, Durham, United Kingdom, 32 minutes ago

100k would provide a lot of donations for local foodbanks

Mr. Goat, London, United Kingdom, 17 minutes ago

Just look at her, do you think for one minute the desperate old mare cares for anyone else?

UseYourCommonSense, London, United Kingdom, 32 minutes ago

She reminds me of the flatmate in 'There's something about Mary'.

Mr. Goat, London, United Kingdom, 18 minutes ago

Was she old as leather with all her junk hangin' out?

honest john, Bracknell, United Kingdom, 39 minutes ago

It does not matter how much you pay for your luxuries like handbags, shoes, clothes, cars, houses, wines, holidays etc, you cannot buy the sort of person you are inside, it just makes you a narcissistic person.

melodyangel63, Birmingham, 41 minutes ago

On a practical note, I'm glad it's not my responsibility to clean a gem encrusted bath. That's really going to look even more awful once a bit of limescale and some dried up jif is adorning the bling!

End LibLabCon, Or Nothing Will Change In The, United Kingdom, 42 minutes ago

Only for the filthy rich....

Mechanic893, Cardiff, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Money yes, but absolutely NO TASTE, tacky as Blackpool.

Bigfoot, London, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

I wonder if he bought those glass beads and cheap looking mosaic from Flea-bay?

Xollob58, Darmstadt, about an hour ago

I hear that Trump has ordered 10...

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Adam West to sell Batman-themed paintings he's created

AP Associated PressDecember 19, 2016

Asso

 P_{res} KETCHUM, Idaho (AP) — The actor who portrayed the tights-clad Batman in the 1960s TV series is selling paintings he has created of villains from the show at an art gallery in the central Idaho resort town of Ketchum near where he now lives.

The opening night of "Criminals on Canvas" is Wednesday at the Gilman Contemporary art gallery, and West is scheduled to attend.

The 88-year-old West in a statement says his paintings capture the humor, zaniness and depth of Batman villains as well as the Freudian motivations of Batman.

West's deadpan portrayal of the comic hero in the campy 1960s series brought the Capped Crusader into the national consciousness as he battled Catwoman, the Joker, the Riddler and the Penguin.

The Sun Valley and Ketchum area typically attracts many wealthy visitors during the holidays.

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'Britain's oldest defendant', aged 101, found guilty of child sex offences

metro.co.uk

Tanveer Mann for Metro.co.ukFriday 16 Dec 2016 1:51 pm



Ralph Clarke, a retired lorry driver, was convicted of 21 charges today relating to two young girls in the 1970s and 1980s. (Picture: PA)

A 101-year-old man, believed to be Britain's oldest defendant, has been found guilty of a string of child sex offences.

Ralph Clarke, a retired lorry

driver, was convicted of 21 charges today relating to two young girls in the 1970s and 1980s.

Clarke admitted nine charges relating to a young boy half way through his trial at Birmingham Crown Court.

He told Birmingham Crown Court that the offences against the schoolboy were 'something that happened' and said he was 'immune to feelings' following his arrest last year.



The 101-year-old had previously admitted two counts of attempting to commit a serious sexual offence, two of indecency with a child, and five indecent assaults on a male person. (Picture: PA)

The 101-year-old had previously admitted two counts of attempting to commit a serious sexual offence, two of indecency with a child, and five indecent assaults on a male person.

Following the verdict, an NSPCC spokesman said: 'Ralph Clarke manipulated vulnerable children to carry out a sickening campaign of abuse.

'His claim that one of his victims "had every choice" and "could have said yes or no" is a shocking insight into his lack of understanding of

the devastating impact abuse has on a child.

'By bravely speaking out, his victims have brought him to justice after all these years.

'It shows survivors of child sexual abuse will be listened to, no matter who – or how old – the abuser is, or how long ago it happened.

Clarke admitted nine charges relating to a young boy half way through his trial at Birmingham Crown Court. (Picture: PA)



'They can contact the NSPCC helpline in confidence, 24/7, on 0800 800 5000, text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.'

The verdict on Friday means Clarke has become Britain's oldest convict, taking over 96-year-old convicted paedophile Gaston Pinsard.

Clarke is expected to be sentenced next week.

credit: PA A general view of Birmingham Crown Court, Birmingham

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Britain's oldest water chute one of 21 odd sites protected in 2016

20:30 EST, 18 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

- Britain's oldest water chute, built in 1926 in Kettering, is now Grade II listed
- Part of the 1,000 places given protected status during 2016 by Historic England
- Body released the details of 21 of the most unusual sites in the country
- Also includes Gunboat sheds associated with the Crimean War at Haslar Gunboat Yard, Gosport

By Rebecca Taylor For Mailonline

A Bronze Age burial site in suburban London, Victorian lamp-posts and Britain's oldest water chute ride are among the more unusual heritage protected this year.

More than 1,000 places have been given protected status across England in 2016, and government body Historic England has released details of 21 of the most surprising and lesser known sites which are now on the heritage list.

They include rock-carvings by conscientious objectors, a newly exposed shipwreck, a rare 'clapper' bridge, gunboat sheds linked to the Crimean War and 18th century artificial bee hives.



The water chute at Wicksteed Park in Kettering, Northamptonshire, built in 1926 and the oldest in Britain, as it has been listed at Grade II

18th century artificial bee hives in St Teath, Bodmin, Cornwall, featuring 'bee bole walls' which would have housed an early form of basket-like woven hive for honey bees known as a 'skep'

Bronze Age funerary barrow in Shooters Hill, Greenwich, south-east London, the last remaining of a group of six, with four thought to have been built on in the 1930s and the location of one other one unknown

Roger Bowdler, director of listing at Historic England, said: 'Over 1,000 places have been added to the list in 2016, ensuring the most important sites across the country are recognised and protected.

'Historic England strives to keep the list rich and relevant so that the best of our, often weird and wonderful, heritage can continue to be enjoyed and understood for future generations.'



Sheriff of London's Gardens in Turvey,
 Bedfordshire, a landscape associated with Turvey
 House laid out in the late 18th century, with John
 Nash believed to have had a hand in its design -

Registered garden.

- Inscriptions left by First World War conscientious objectors, near Broughton-in-Furness, Lake District National Park, Cumbria, who carved 1916, CONs OBJECTORS, a name and sets of initials while on the run from the authorities Scheduled.
- Post-War "Lego Building", at the University of Reading in Berkshire, built in 1970-1972, and dubbed the Lego Building because of its distinctive, exposed concrete design Listed at Grade II.



- Bronze Age funerary barrow in Shooters Hill, Greenwich, south-east London, the last remaining of a group of six, with four thought to have been built on in the 1930s and the location of one other one unknown - Scheduled.
- Gunboat sheds associated with the Crimean War at Haslar Gunboat Yard, Gosport, Hampshire, part of a site for the British gunboat fleet that developed in the 1850s, for their storage, maintenance and fast launch Listed at Grade I.
- The water chute at Wicksteed Park in Kettering, Northamptonshire, built in 1926 and the oldest in Britain - Listed at Grade II.
- 18th century artificial bee hives in St Teath, Bodmin, Cornwall, featuring "bee bole walls" which

would have housed an early form of basket-like woven hive for honey bees known as a "skep" - Listed at Grade II.

- Former women's prison and exercise yard at Rye Castle, East Sussex, developed to house female prisoners separately and giving a glimpse of an imprisoned woman's lot in the early 19th century Listed at Grade II.
- Rare clapper bridge in Castleton, Whitby, North Yorkshire, a simple form of bridge with horizontal stone slabs supported by vertical piers and rare for its time in the later 18th century, when more complex arched bridges were more common Listed at Grade II.
- Olde English Tea House in Sunnyhurst Wood, Darwen, Lancashire, constructed in 1911-1912 to mark the accession and coronation of King George V Listed at Grade II.
- Shipwreck on Madbrain Sands in Minehead, Somerset, a rare and unidentified wooden wreck exposed by the winter storms of 2014/2015 and possibly the Bristol Packet wrecked at Minehead in 1808
 Scheduled.
- Rare bathing house and Sea Wall at Norris Castle in East Cowes, Isle of Wight, designed as a castellated tower in a similar style to the nearby Gothic revival castle Listed at Grade II.
- War memorial to 2,130 City of London employees, St Michael's Alley, Cornhill, central London, who volunteered for military service in the First World War, at least 170 of whom died Listed at Grade II*.
- A series of six Victorian lamp-posts in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, designed in 1848 and thought to have been moved to Montpellier Parade from another location in the town the 1970s Listed at Grade II.
- Jewish Mortuary Chapel in Norwich, Norfolk, a small chapel and accompanying burial ground in the northern part Earlham Cemetery which provided dedicated facilities for burying Jewish people Listed Grade II.
- Alan Sorrell "Seasons" mural at Myton School in Warwick, Warwickshire, painted in 1953 by the significant neo-Romantic artist and featuring a fire-breathing dragon Listed at Grade II.

He said the 21 sites and structures on the organisation's highlights list aimed to draw attention to some of the lesser-known heritage protected this year but which all play a role in telling people about England's history.



One of a series of six Victorian lamp-posts in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, designed in 1848 and thought to have been moved to Montpellier Parade

Gunboat sheds associated with the Crimean War at Haslar Gunboat Yard, Gosport, Hampshire

They range from the ancient, such as the Bronze Age funerary barrow in Shooters Hill, south-east London, which is about 82ft (25m) wide and 5ft (1.5m) high, to the 1970s concrete 'Lego Building' at the University of Reading campus.

A series of elegant Victorian lamp-posts in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, designed in 1848, which were once gas lights and are now powered by electricity, also make it on to the list.



A rare clapper bridge in Castleton, Whitby, North Yorkshire, a simple form of bridge with horizontal stone slabs supported by vertical pier

A shipwreck on Madbrain Sands in Minehead, Somerset, a rare and unidentified wooden wreck exposed by the winter storms of 2014/2015 and possibly the Bristol Packet wrecked at Minehead in 1808

Inscriptions left by First World War conscientious objectors, near Broughton-in-Furness, Lake District National Park, Cumbria, who carved 1916, CONs OBJECTORS, a name and sets of initials while on the run from the authorities

So too does the water chute at Wicksteed Park in Kettering, Northamptonshire, which was built in 1926 as part of a leisure park created by philanthropist Charles Wicksteed, who was a key figure in the development of children's play equipment.

Comments (10)

ThePatriot, United, United Kingdom, 32 minutes ago

Listing thousands of site that now are rapped in miles of red tape and expensive renovation costs. Well done

Sylvain83, Birmingham, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Architecture,iron ware,lamp posts,fire places,hearths,everything,was beautifully made back in the day,now nearly everything is junk from China etc,such a shame.

valleyroad, Chippenham, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

Not beehives, just alcoves to shelter the straw skeps which were thel hives, from the weather. Wooden hives actually came later, a giant leap forward in beekeeping technology.





letsjustbefair, Yorkshire, about 2 hours ago

It's interesting when you look at the old images from your town/village and see what the planners did. Knocked down buildings and features to replace them with awful concrete.....sad thing is those concrete buildings have now gone and replaced with car parks. Sad

outback mal, rockingham, about 3 hours ago

I well remember the water chute at Wicksteed Park in Kettering. I was evacuated to Kettering in the war. it looked like an old ship's lifeboat, that plunged down the chute and was then winched back up to the top by an attached cable. This was in 1944.

bill, nuneaton, about 6 hours ago





The water chute at Wicksteed Park... what a treat when we were kids.

Ladylyn Bucks, Olney, United Kingdom, 33 minutes ago

Loved it, have got soaked many a time.

dollar, grren man leytonstone, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

plenty of lamp posts in walthamstow

Waltersmummy, Cambridge, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

Happy dogs:)

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Nicole Morley for Metro.co.ukFriday 16 Dec 2016 8:11 am



Cuba try to pay £222 million debt off in rum

communist bloc.

Cuba is trying to clear its cold war-era debt with rum (Picture: Reuters)

Cuba has come up with a rather novel way of paying off their cold war-era debt.

The Czech Finance Ministry says Cuba has offered its trademark rum – £222 million worth, to be exact.

Finance Ministry spokesman Michal Zurovec said that Cuban authorities have proposed to pay back \$276 million to the Czech Republic from the time both countries were part of the

If the boozy proposal becomes reality, the Czech would have enough Cuban rum for well over a century. Hiccup.

According to the Czech Statistics Office, the Czechs imported rum from Cuba worth over \$2 million (£1.6m) last year.

Zurovec says that the Czechs would still prefer the debt was at least partly paid in cash

In the past, North Korea wanted to repay its \$10 million (£8m) debt with products made with ginseng.

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18 December 2016

From the section North West Wales

http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-north-west-wales-38330272



Previous best guesses for the home of Camelot include Winchester, Monmouthshire, and Somerset

The quest to find King Arthur's Camelot has puzzled and intrigued scholars and fans for over a thousand years.

The mythical ruler's legendary court has been associated with locations throughout Wales, including Carmarthen, St David's, and Cardigan.

Now a retired Bangor University professor has revealed what he believes to be the true location of Camelot.

And it turns out to be a small Roman fort at Slack, outside Hebden Bridge in West Yorkshire.

Prof Peter Field, a renowned expert in Arthurian literature, said: "It was quite by chance. I was looking at some maps, and suddenly all the ducks lined up.

"I believe I may have solved a 1,400-year-old mystery."

Previous best guesses for the location of the round table include Caerleon in Newport, Somerset's Cadbury Castle, and Tintagel in Cornwall.

Image caption

In Roman times, Slack was home to a fort called Camulodunum, which means "the fort of the god Camul".

Over the years, well-recognised linguistic processes would have reduced Camulodunum to Camelot.

Though almost forgotten and insignificant today, and even though it was abandoned and dilapidated by the relevant time of King Arthur around A.D. 500, Prof Field argues that this site at Slack would still have been considered a strategic stronghold.

At that time, Celtic-speaking Britons, who could have been led by King Arthur, held the north and the west coast against the invading Anglo-Saxons.

Slack, on the Roman road from Chester to York, would have been the ideal location from which to defend the east coast.

Prof Field added: "If there was a real King Arthur, he will have lived around AD500, although the first mention of him in Camelot is in a French poem from the Champagne region of France from 1180.

"There is no mention of Camelot in the period between those dates, known as the Dark Ages, when the country was at war, and very little was recorded.

"In this gap, people passed on information, much got lost in transmission, and people may have made up facts or just messed up known information."

Prof Field, who taught at Bangor from 1964 to 2004, has been researching the location of Camelot for the past 18 months.

He spoke about his findings during the official launch of Bangor University's Stephen Colclough centre for the history and culture of the book.

Image copyright Geograph/Richard Kay



By Sarah Cottrell

If you are from Maine or any New England state for that matter then chances are pretty good that you've participated in a Yankee Swap during the holidays. But do you really know what a Yankee Swap is or where it came from? Be prepared to be amazed as I drop some historical facts on you.

Some history

The Yankee Swap has its origins in the Civil War when Yankee and Confederate generals would participate in a prisoner swap. These swaps were based on gentleman's agreements and were never formalized through contracts because of the Union was not exactly thrilled about the concept of giving any legitimacy to a Confederate government. For reasons not exactly clear, the generals made

something of a game out of the prisoner swap and assigned a value to the rank of each prisoner; one private was the same value as another private but two privates together were worth one sergeant or corporal, and three private were worth a lieutenant. But the biggest prize was 60 privates for one general.

Because some of the prisoner camps were so notorious for being overcrowded and prisoners dying of disease, exposure, and even starvation, the generals used this method to clean out their camps and shift resources around. The gentlemen's agreement got ugly toward 1865 and the practice was halted.

How to play a Yankee Swap

A Yankee Swap is pretty simple. You need at least four people to participate, but the more the better. Each player is tasked with purchasing a gift with a specific budget in mind. Some folks opt for \$5 and others opt for as high as \$20, but the point is to keep it as cheap as possible. Make sure the gift is wrapped then place it under the tree. Once everyone is together, one person takes a hat and tosses in scrap pieces of paper that each has a number corresponding to the number of players. The hat gets passed around and everyone takes out a number. Starting with the number one, the first player (number one) chooses a gift, unwraps it, and shows it to the other players. The next player (number two) can choose to steal that gift or open a new one. If the second player steals a gift then the first player may open a new gift. The gifts are opened and shown to the other players. Player three can choose to steal a gift from anyone who has chosen a gift or opt to choose an unwrapped gift. This goes on until all the gifts are opened.

Is this the same as a game of White Elephant?

No! The Yankee Swap gifts are intended to be as useful as possible. The more useful and desirable the gift then the more fun you have stealing gifts. Also, the idea of being thrifty and useful is a mainstay virtue that is quintessential New England.

The White Elephant game is played exactly like the Yankee Swap, but the gifts are intended to be burdensome, annoying, or super duper campy. Think fruitcake or a tacky coffee mug. The Elephant game has historical roots in

The Elephant game has historical roots in stories about the King of Siam, who was apparently kind of a jerk when it came to gift giving. If he didn't like you, then he would gift you a rare albino elephant knowing that it would be a huge pain in the derriere to take care of and would likely financially ruin you. Who wants an extravagant gift that you can't take care of or get rid of?

Popular gifts for a Yankee Swap

Have you been invited to participate in a Yankee Swap? here is a quick list of gifts that you can find for under \$10 that any Mainer would love.

- 1. Wool socks
- 2. Coffee gift card
- 3. Hand warmers
- 4. Walkway salt
- 5. Emergency car kit stuff like cat litter, batteries, flashlight, jumper cables, or flairs
- 6. Long underwear
- 7. Crampons
- 8. Compass
- 9. Atlas
- 10. Box of wine

And there you have it! Some interesting facts, game rules, and gift ideas for your next Yankee Swap.

Happy holidays!

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Horse called Party Till Dawn tests positive for meth

metro.co.uk

Harley Tamplin for Metro.co.ukSaturday 17 Dec 2016 5:57 pm



A horse bares it's teeth as if to be laughing. Credit: Getty Images

We really shouldn't be surprised (Picture: Getty)

A racehorse named Party Till Dawn has tested positive for methamphetamine.

The fittingly named five-year-old mare failed a drugs test after finishing second at a race in Queensland, Australia.

However, its trainer Ben Currie, who has been taking care of the horse since May, told ABC he believed he had a good case to fight the charges.

Currie, 25, will face the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, who said the sample was

taken at a race meeting in June.

The commission previously fined trainer Cassandra Marsh after her horse Island Tang tested positive for meth.

It is the second time one of Currie's horses has failed a drugs test.

He was fined after horse Tints tested positive for banned substance boldenone, but Currie plans to appeal the ruling.

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Icelandic Terrors

December 23, 2013 Wordpress.com

https://scarylittlechristmas.wordpress.com/2013/12/23/icelandic-terrors/

A Scary Little Christmas

Iceland may be the last place you'd want to spend the Christmas holidays. Here's why:

Gryla

One of Iceland's most renowned figures associated with Christmas made her first appearance in ancient Pagan times. An especially terrifying figure, Gryla is a giant troll with hooves for feet and sports an impressive thirteen tails. This lady-troll is in a perpetual bad mood due to her insatiable hunger...for children. Each Christmas, Gryla comes down from her mountain dwelling to hunt for bad children. She places them in a sack and drags them back to her cave where she boils them alive for her favorite stew.



Image

Grylas wrath is not reserved solely for human children, but she has been through three husbands already, two of which she killed because they bored her. I'm sure you are wondering by now what her children are like. She has thirteen of them, all boys and they are the subject of the next Icelandic Christmas monster:

The Yule Lads

The thirteen sons of Gryla are each known for a particular habit or characteristic, much like the Disney version of Snow White's seven dwarves. Most of them are depicted as mischievous pranksters and petty criminals. Icelandic children are visited each night on the thirteen days leading up to Christmas.



Image

They are:

Sheep Cote Clog – A peg legged sheep fancier. His "fancy-ing" is impaired by his peg legs.

Gully Gawk – hides out in ditches or gullies and waits for an opportune moment to run into the cow shed and lick the foam off the milk in the milking buckets.

Stubby – His name denotes his stature as he is unusually short. If your pie pan is missing, you can bet Stubby has stolen it to eat whatever pie crust was left behind.

Spoon Licker – Licker and thief of spoons.

Pot Scraper - Petty thief of leftovers.

Bowl Licker – This one hides under your bed and waits for you to absentmindedly put down your bowl so he can steal and yes, lick it.

Door Slammer – Oh, did you just fall asleep? Not for long! This guy plans on slamming doors all night.

Skyr Gobbler - There will be no skyr, a type of yogurt, left in your house on the night the Skyr Gobbler visits.

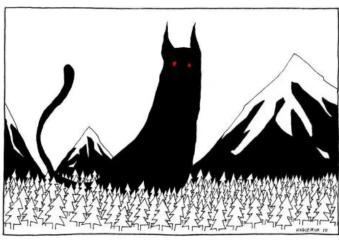
Sausage Swiper – He's going to steal your sausage. I hope its well hidden.

Window Peeper - He's watching you right now.

Doorway Sniffer – Uses his incredibly large nose to sniff through doors as a leaf bread, (a traditional Icelandic Christmas bread), locator.

Meat Hook – This fellow always brings a hook along with him so he can steal meat.

Candle Stealer - He follows children around so he can steal their candles, leaving them in the dark...



Image

The Yule Cat – The pet of both Gryla and The Yule Lads, The Yule Cat's prey consists of both children and adults. Unlike the others, this cat does not care about your misdeeds during the year. The only insurance against being torn apart and eaten by this giant feline, is receiving an article of new clothing for Christmas. Shop wisely.

Images:

Gryla painting image sourced from this post

The Yule Lads image

References

Iceland.is

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McDonald's franchisee sued over value meal prices

chicagotribune.com 2016-12-19

A McDonald's franchisee engaged in deceptive business practices because "Extra Value Meals" cost more than the items ordered separately, according to a new lawsuit.

Samantha BomkampContact ReporterChicago Tribune

A Des Plaines man has filed a lawsuit against a local McDonald's franchisee, alleging the restaurant operator engaged in deceptive business practices because "Extra Value Meals" cost more than the items ordered separately.

James Gertie claims that Karis Management Co., of Des Plaines, which operates about 10 locations in the area, charges \$5.49 for two cheeseburgers, medium fries and a medium fountain drink when purchased individually, but the value meal costs \$5.90. Gertie bought the two cheeseburger value meal at five McDonald's locations across Des Plaines and Niles operated by the franchisee in October and November, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit, filed last week in Cook County Circuit Court, seeks class-action status.

A Karis representative declined to comment.

sbomkamp@chicagotribune.com

Twitter @SamWillTravel

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Medieval Festive Survival Guide

HSILING HSILING

20 December 2015

To help you negotiate the festive season, medieval writers, illustrators and patrons had some useful tips ...

1. Ensure the prompt delivery of your Christmas greetings by hiring a messenger.

BRITISH LIBRARY



Harley_ms_4425_f137v

Detail of a messenger from Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's Roman de la Rose, Low Countries (Bruges), c 1490-c 1500, Harley MS 4425, f. 137v

2. If you're stuck for gift ideas, books always make great presents. The Bedford Hours was once a Christmas gift.



Add_ms_18850_f075r

The Wise Men offering Christ gifts, from the Bedford Hours, France (Paris), c. 1410-1430, Add MS 18850, f. 75r

3. On the subject of gifts, if you can't find a partridge for your pear tree, a king will do...



King Mark Pear Tree

Image of King
Mark in a pear
tree, from a
series of
drawings
illustrating the
Tristan romance,
England
(London?),
2nd or
3rd quarter of the
13th century, Add
MS 11619, f. 8r

4. At Christmas parties, don't get caught out under the mistletoe: timing is everything!

Detail of Pygmalion kissing the statue, from Roman de la Rose, Northern France (Artois or Picardy), c. 1340, Royal MS 20 A XVII, f. 171r



Royal 20 A XVII Pygmalion



Royal 6 E VII K042592

5. Know when you have had enough to drink.

Ebrietas (Drunkenness) from Omne Bonum (Ebrietas-Humanus), England (London), c. 1360-c. 1375, Royal MS 6 E VII, f. 1r

6. If you discover you have a headache, though, try tying some crosswort to your head with a red cloth or smearing your temples with pennyroyal boiled in oil or butter or placing 'stones' from three young sparrows on your head. This allegedly also works for nightmares, temptations and 'evil enchantments by song' (for an edition and translation, see *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, ed. by T. O. Cockayne, Rolls Series, 3 vols (London: Longmans, 1864-66), vol II (1864), pp. 304-07).



Remedies of headaches, from Bald's Leechbook, England (Winchester?), mid-10th century, Royal MS 12 D XVII, f. 111r.

7. Enjoy Christmas dinner.

Royal_ms_12_d_xvii_f111r

Detail of feasting from Histoire Universelle, Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (Acre), c. 1275-91, Add MS 15268, f. 242v

8. Enjoy some seasonal music.

Part of the liturgy for Christmas, from the Leofric Collectar, England (Exeter), c. 1050-c. 1072, Harley MS 2961, f. 12v

9. And remember, a dog is for life not just for Christmas.

Miniature of the resurrected Christ with Margaret of York and a dog, from Nicolas Finet, Dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne, Low Countries (Brussels), c. 1468, Add MS 7970, f. 1v







Detail of King John with a

Harley_ms_2961_f012v

Margaret of York dog



hunting dog, from a collection of drawings with various inscriptions and poems, Northern England, c. 1307-1327, Royal MS 20 A II, f. 8v

Posted by Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Manuscripts at 5:01 AM

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Mystery solved over drunk student who fell through stranger's roof

metro.co.uk

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukSunday 18 Dec 2016 4:45 pm



The student only wants to be identified as Dave (Picture: SWNS)

A drunk student has revealed how he ended up falling through a stranger's garage roof – after 'booze got the better of him' on a night out.

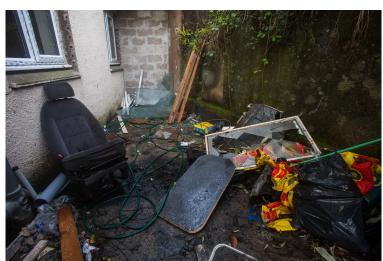
The Plymouth University student – who has asked just to be identified as 'Dave' – was found dazed, confused and bloodied with a gash on his face by the Hepper family.

He said he was unconscious for over an hour and now has a face like a 'character from the Walking

Dead'.

Shocked Chris and Lou Hepper were asleep in bed at home when their dog suddenly started barking at around 1.45am.

After hearing a strange noise, Chris, 32, looked outside and saw a stranger had fallen 10ft from their garden wall and through their garage roof.



(Picture: SWNS) (Picture: SWNS)

They called an ambulance but the man walked off because he 'wanted to go home', however, they took a photo of the intruder before he fled in a bid to track him down.

The student, who studies International Business, said he doesn't usually drink much – but on this occasion the booze got the better of him.

Miraculously, Dave managed to escape

without any broken bones but he spent the night in hospital where he had 10 stitches.

Dave, who lives in Cattedown, said: 'I was on a night out with some uni friends. I don't go out drinking that much, but apparently on this occasion I had too much to drink.

'I'm pretty sure I landed face first, so don't remember a lot. I genuinely couldn't say whether I got lost, was pushed or whatever else.

(Picture: SWNS)







ended up on our garage floor.

(Picture: SWNS)

'Apparently I was unconscious for over an hour. When I woke up I could see walls on either side of myself with no obvious way out. To say I was confused was probably an understatement.

'I spent the night in hospital and managed to get off with ten stitches. Fortunately I didn't break anything, but I'll have some scars and my jacket has probably seen its last day.

'Nothing even remotely like this has ever happened. I don't drink that much and even when I drink, I tend to stop before it's overly late. My memory is very fuzzy but am hoping I can remember what happened eventually.

The student says he is indebted to the Heppers from their help and once his face has cleared up plans to visit their house in Exeter Street, Plymouth, to say thank you.

(Picture: SWNS)

'I want to take this moment again just to thank them for helping me. It just goes to show that

human decency still exists,' added Dave.

'I cannot apologise and thank them enough, but I have their address and plan to thank them again in person when I don't look like a character from the Walking Dead.'

Lou, 32, of Plymouth, Devon, who works as a kitchen assistant, said at the time: 'He was very intoxicated.

'We couldn't really understand what he was saying, but he said he had been on a night out and couldn't remember how he had

'There was just blood everywhere and he was covered in glass. We rang the ambulance just before 2am and it still wasn't there at 3am, which is why he went.

'There was no other way into the garage so he must have fallen the eight to 10ft drop from the garden wall.



'He told us he lived behind the back of the Coop in the Cattedown area. We think he had just lost his way.

'All we want to know is if he is alright.'

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bbc.com

By M Ilyas Khan BBC News, Islamabad

19 December 2016



The crash on 7 December killed all 47 people on board

Pakistan's national airline has been mocked after a goat was sacrificed to ward off bad luck following one of the country's worst air disasters.

Pictures went viral showing PIA ground staff slaughtering a black goat next to an ATR-42 aircraft which was about to leave for a domestic flight.

It was the first such flight since PIA grounded its ATR fleet for tests after a 7 December crash killed 47

people.

In Pakistan killing a black goat is supposed by many to ward off evil.

But the move by ground staff in Islamabad prompted hoots of incredulity once it was established the images were genuine and had not been photo-shopped.

A Pakistan International Airlines spokesman was swift to point out the goat had been slaughtered by employees on their own initiative and the airline management had no hand in it.

The Dawn newspaper covered the event in a front page story headlined "PIA: on a wing and a prayer". The headline of the Express Tribune newspaper read: "PIA lampooned for bizarre goat slaughter".

The Express Tribune commented that the "ritual sacrifice shows fear besetting the PIA employees associated with flight operations, especially those assigned to ATRs".

Comments on social media were mixed - while many mocked PIA for indulging in superstition, others defended the slaughter as a practice endorsed by Islam.

"Good move. Fresh mutton on flight menu," joked Nadeem Farooq Paracha, a Dawn blogger and columnist, in a tweet.

Another journalist, Fasi Zaka, tweeted: "PIA sacrifices a black goat before resuming ATR services, they take their historical nickname 'Please Inform Allah' (PIA) very seriously."

Television anchor Ejaz Haider tweeted: "When Charles Perrow was working on his theory of normal accidents, he totally missed out on 'kala bakra' [black goat] as a hedge against accidents."

Meanwhile, one Twitter user by the name of MisBis spoke for many when she wrote: "There's nothing wrong in giving Sadga [sacrificial offering]... Sadga bari balao se bachata hai [it hedges against many troubles]... stop making it a joke".



PIA had 11 ATR-42 planes in its fleet - the one that crashed in the Havelian region on 7 December killed all those on board.

Days later, the pilot of another ATR had to abort take-off due to a malfunction in one of the engines, leading PIA to ground the rest of its ATRs for tests.

This affected PIA operations to smaller destinations such as Chitral, Gilgit, Gwadar and many other destinations in Balochistan, Sindh and Puniab where small air strips and lack of technical cover do not allow larger planes to land.

Map showing Chitral in north, with Islamabad further Did Sunday night's sacrifice help? south, with approx crash site nearby

All we can say is the flight departed safely for Multan, and later returned to Islamabad.

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Holy mackerel! Thousands of fish wash up on the Cornish coast again

10:36 EST, 18 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Thousands of fish washed up on Marazion Beach, Cornwall on Saturday morning
- A dog walker stumbled across the eerie sight of stacks of fish at low tide
- Earlier in December thousands of fish were found on nearby Pentwean Beach
- Marine life experts say the phenomenon could

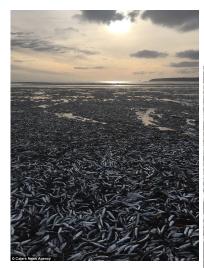
be because of weather conditions

By Simon Holmes For Mailonline

Thousands of fish have washed up on a Cornwall beach for the second time in a month creating an eerie scene.

On December 4 locals came across stacks of dead mackerel and herring on Pentwean Beach and now more have been discovered by a dog walker on Marazion Beach which is 40 miles from the first location.

Local resident David Hughes spotted the mysterious sight of the varying kinds of fish on Sunday morning at low tide.



Endless: Thousands of fish lay strewn across the beach in Cornwall on Saturday



Stacks: Thousands of fish, mainly mackerel and herring, were found at low tide by a dog walker

He said his dog nor seagulls flying over head wanted to go near the dead sea creatures and didn't know why.

David said: 'I just got back from a walk on the beach at Marazion, Cornwall and noticed thousands of fish which I believe to be Mackerel

washed up on the beach at low tide.

'Interestingly, the seagulls were not interested in these fish even though they looked very fresh and our boxer dog did not even try to eat them?

'Would be interested if you hear of any reason this may have happened'.

After the first batch of fish washed up on Pentwean Beach experts said bad weather could be to blame for the phenomenon.



Gasping: Experts says the fish may have been trying to evade a predator or unfavourable weather conditions and swam to close to the shore



Dog walker David Hughes said his dog nor the over looping seagulls wanted to eat the dead fish

James Wright, curator of the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, told the BBC that such

events usually happen in the summer months.

At this time fish, mackerel in particular, follow their prey into warmer waters and then in turn are hunted by something themselves.

He said: 'It's quite unusual for fish to want to leave the water, it's usually a result of panic, because of a predator, but at this time of year that would be unusual.

'It is possible they were all caught in particularly bad weather when they were near the surface and washed up by the waves.'

The fish do not appear to have been affected by pollution, according to Mr Wright, but he advised that people should not take them home and eat them.

In 2014, hundreds of tiny, dead whitebait were found washed up at nearby Mullion Harbour on the Lizard in southern Cornwall.

At the time the same phenomenon had been reported all along the south coast, with the fish being driven onshore after being chased by predators.



Comments (

The comments below have not been moderated.

Brad84, Cornwall, United Kingdom, 25 minutes ago

I watched a local fishing vessel there on Saturday morning (08:15) just off the shoreline. On Sunday I arrived at the same time in the morning and noticed the vast amount of fish washed up. I was told by a fellow fisherman that the fishing vessel yesterday had way to much fish in his net and was unable to get his net onboard. As the tide was going out the fishing vessel had no choice but to dump the fish otherwise face being grounded on the sand. It was extremely sad as not only were there thousands of dead fish but also a dead dolphin. I'm lead to believe the fisherman was being greedy!

Oracle, Delphi, Kyrgyzstan, 9 minutes ago

Very interesting. I hope the authorities follow up your account of these events.

Toni Moseley, BIRMINGHAM, United Kingdom, 40 minutes ago

Could be the weather Errr yes, your poisoning the atmosphere with your chemtrails, hence poisoning the ocean's and the soil

JB, anywhere, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

They would make good fertilizer for local farmers

needy1, grimsby, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Tony Blair was seen swimming in the sea earlier.

Blunderz, London, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

It's obviously a fishing ship that has dumped them because of going over their quoter , another reason to leave the eu

TravelinMan, England, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

quoter?

ray ninagain, over the rainbow, United Kingdom, 2 minutes ago

Who said that?

Sojourner, Pyrenees, France, about 2 hours ago

I presume a few will be off to the labs for a looksy????

londonlighter, london, about 2 hours ago

Alert Rick Stein, he'll make a tasty dish out of those fish

Spiritus Veritas, Berkshire, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

Hosea 4:3

Dimension9, St Albans, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

The end is near...

melodyangel63, Birmingham, 18 minutes ago

The end has already arrived for those fish.

UncleAlbert, Norwich, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

I blame Brexit.

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Britain's oldest fairy lights still shining bright for their 70th year

10:37 EST, 19 December 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk



Still glowing strong! Britain's oldest fairy lights are still shining bright for the 70th year in a row this Christmas

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Ray Liverton, 87, has owned a set of fairy lights for more than 70 years
- Retired electrician says he has never replaced a

single bulb on the string

• He uses the pretty light to decorate his small plastic Christmas tree each year

By Keiligh Baker for MailOnline

A set of fairy lights believed to be Britain's oldest are still shining bright for the 70th year in a row this Christmas.

Retired electrician Ray Liverton, 87, has somehow kept the ancient string of 12 lights in working order over the decades without ever replacing a single bulb.

Mr Liverton, who lives in the village of Swimbridge, Devon, believes they are the oldest and most reliable set of fairy lights in the country.



Retired electrician Ray Liverton, 87, from Swimbridge in Devon, has somehow kept the ancient string of 12 lights (pictured) in working order over the decades without ever replacing a bulb

His father Burt bought them for his teenage son in 1946, after seeing an offer for them in a newspaper advert.

But it caused an argument with his wife Ethel, who felt the two shillings and sixpence price was too expensive in the austere times after the Second World War.

Burt eventually persuaded her and it has proved a worthwhile investment as the family have used the lights every year since.

When his father died Mr Liverton took over responsibility for the fragile lights 52 years ago and continued to use them every Christmas with his late wife Sheila and son Max.

Mr Liverton (pictured with his son Max and granddaughter Micha) believes they are the oldest and most reliable set of fairy lights in the country

Max, 54, remembers them being put up in his bedroom as a young child and now his daughter Micha, 7, is the fourth generation of the family to enjoy their warm glow.

Unlike the cheaply-made modern lights adorning most trees this festive season, Ray's sturdier illuminations were made from 20-vault bulbs originally used on ships.



Every December he carefully brings them out for family and friends to enjoy before delicately packing them away in a plastic box he stores in a cupboard to keep them safe.



Every December he carefully brings them out for family and friends to enjoy before delicately packing them away in a plastic box he stores in a cupboard to keep them safe

Widower Ray said: 'My dad bought them after the war, in 1946, when he saw them advertised

in a daily paper. He and my mum had a row about it. He wanted to buy them for me but mum thought they were too expensive.

'They were two shillings and sixpence, which was a lot of money in those days. We didn't have things like fairy lights during the war and they were very scarce after the war, these were made from 20-vault ship lights.

'Dad eventually persuaded mum so he bought them and we've had them ever since.

'When he died I took on the lights and I carry on bringing them out every year in memory of my dad.

'I've got a plastic box that I pack them away in after every Christmas and I keep them in a cupboard downstairs, not in the attic, because I want to protect them.

'I used to be an electrician so I've always carefully looked after them. I have got lots of different sets of lights, including some my wife's uncle had not long after the war, but none as old as these.

'Every year I plug them in and hold my breath to see if they are still working - they've not let me down yet.

'My wife Sheila used to like putting up the lights and decorating the tree, but she died five years ago.

'Now my niece Jacky, she's like a daughter to me and she comes to decorate for me because I'm getting on a bit.

'When anything happens to me I hope my son will continue to look after them..'

Max said: 'I remember I used to have them up in my bedroom at Christmas as a child, every year from when I was about 3. My dad would plug them into the main ceiling light and hang them in a triangle above my bed.

'He would always have them wrapped up carefully, they weren't allowed to be tangled.

'I don't know what he would do if one of the bulbs went because he definitely wouldn't find a replacement now.

'I'm amazed they're still going but they come from a time when things were made to last. And these came from ships so they were made to a military standard.'



Comments (

null, about 12 hours ago

When things were made to last unlike nowadays

Cat_Up_a_Tree, Cambridge UK, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

Another Triggers Broom.

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First World War Christmas truce was not a one-off

18:55 EST, 19 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



First World War Christmas truce was not a one-off: Historian uncovers evidence of a significant number of meetings during 1916

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- Christmas truces during the First World War were not a one-off, evidence shows
- It had been thought the truces stopped as the

conflict grew more brutal

But they continued throughout and there were a significant number in 1916

By Daily Mail Reporter

Christmas truces during the First World War were not a one-off, a historian has found.

It had been thought that, after 1914, the truces stopped as the conflict grew more brutal.

But Thomas Weber, of Aberdeen University, has uncovered evidence that the meetings continued throughout the war.



Christmas truces during the First World War were not a one-off, a historian has found. Pictured, soldiers play football on No-Man's Land during the Christmas Truce of 1914

He found a significant number in 1916, despite huge casualties in the Battle of the Somme that year.

Though official documents recorded that no such exchanges took place, Professor Weber found the situation on the front lines was very different.



There were a significant number in 1916, despite huge casualties in the Battle of the Somme that year.

Pictured, British infantrymen occupy a trench during the Battle of the Somme

In an account of a truce between German and Canadian troops at Vimy Ridge, northern France, in 1916, one soldier, Ronald MacKinnon, wrote: 'We had a truce on Xmas Day and our German friends were quite friendly.

'They came over to see us and we traded bully beef for cigars. Xmas was "tray bon" which means very good.'

Professor Weber said: 'What we see is that, despite the difficulties they endured, soldiers never tried to stop fraternising with their opponents, not just during Christmas but throughout the year.'



Comments (

yyyyyy, Sydeny, Australia, about 2 hours ago

I don't think this is a 'new discovery' however as we have been teaching that in NSW schools since the early 1990s at least. The big one was 1914 but it did continue to happen all through the war in smaller ways.

Alexandra, West Vancouver, Canada, about 3 hours ago

"War is organised murder. "... Harry Patch, UK's last surviving Tommy RIP Harry.

Sleuth, East of Eden, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

Is it too much to hope that our politicians have learn some lessons from WW1 and WW2 and are not sleep-walking us into WW3 ???

Tim R, Manchester, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

The way things are going, even if just for hours or of a day, the camaraderie of a shared culture and religion will never unfortunately be a slightest possible factor in stilling the battlefields. In any of the currently foreseeable future European conflicts.

Mr. Gumby, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 21 minutes ago

I'm hoping with you. I am "post war" and would very much like to keep it that way.

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Terrified Indian villagers run as Lion slaughters cow in front of them

06:51 EST, 19 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



Terrified Indian villagers take cover on their roofs and balconies as a rampaging LION slaughters a cow and stalks the streets

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- A lioness entered a village where she killed and devoured a cow in front of locals
- The big cat fled after a truck pulled up behind

and drove slowly to shoo her away

- Onlookers perched on balconies and walls over looking the street and the lion
- Locals say the lion returned later that night to finishing eating the dead cow

By Simon Holmes For Mailonline

Shocked residents of a village watched in disbelief as a lion stalked the narrow streets and killed a cow in broad daylight.

The lioness ventured into the Virpur-Gadhia village in the Amreli district in India leaving open mouthed locals terrified and hiding in doorways as she devoured her feast.

Onlookers can be heard screaming in footage caught by one scared local from a first floor window which has since gone viral online.



What is all the fuss about? The lion looks nonchalantly on with the legs of the dead cow visible in the background. Curious locals took cover on their roofs, balconies and walls

The video shows the huge mammal parading around the streets, with the bloodied corpse of the cow laying lifelessly at the side of the road.

The ferocious lion only stops eating when a truck tries to prompt her to move by driving slowly behind her.

Screams then intensify as onlookers worry about what the beast could do next as it reverses on itself and walks up the street which is aligned with people either on balconies or siting precariously on

low walls.

But the lioness decides she has had enough drama for the day and walks off back into the forest.

Stalking: The hungry lioness parading the narrow village streets with a blood stained face

I'll save it for later. The beast takes a break from her lunch. Locals say she returned at night to finish the meal

But villagers have revealed that wasn't the end of the incident.

She returned later after night fell at around 7pm to finish off the leftovers from her meal.



The village of Virpur-Gadhia is located around 6 miles from the nearby Gir Wildlife Sanctuary where the lioness is believed to have come from.

They are often spotted in the outskirts in the forests, but they rarely make their way into populated areas.

A truck was used to shoo the lioness away from the scene although the she managed to squirm through the sides and walk back to the cow and scared locals

Villagers said they informed the forest department about the incident.

Deputy divisional forest officers worked to capture the lioness safely, without using tranquilisers to release her back into the forest, adding that she has "never attacked a human to date" and is used to seeing them

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Boy spent THREE DAYS stuck in a wall after passersby ignored screams

07:38 EST, 19 December 2016 | dailymail.co.uk



Boy, 12, is rescued after spending THREE DAYS trapped in a wall as locals ignored his cries for help in Nigeria

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- A 12 year-old boy became lodged in a tiny gap between a house and a wall
- Aduragbemi Saka was playing in the 12 inch

gap in a cafe in Ondo, Nigeria

- Passers by ignored his cries for three days before his singing alerted locals
- Police smashed through the wall and pulled him out covered in dust but still alive

By Simon Holmes For Mailonline

A 12-year-old boy was miraculously rescued after spending three days trapped in a tiny gap between a house and a wall.

Aduragbemi Saka had been visiting a cafe alone when he started playing in 12-inches wide gap between the breeze block wall and a student house.

But he became stuck and with no relatives nearby he spent three days crying to himself - with passersby ignoring the sounds.



Smash: The boy's dusty body is revealed as a local breaks open the wall with a pickax



Nearly there. After three days of being trapped in the wall Saka is on the verge of freedom

Eventually neighbours heard the boy singing to himself and they looked inside the gap to see him curled up in a ball.

Police smashed through the wall and pulled him out covered in dust but still alive in the Oduduwa Area of Ondo state, Nigeria.

Resident Felicia Olaniyi said the boy had run away from his grandmother who had been

looking after him at the time.

She said: "I asked my neighbours if they were aware of the strange voice inside the wall and they were also confused about what was going on there.

"So we got a ladder to trace where the voice was coming from and found the young boy where he was stuck. A policeman had to break the wall to rescue him."



Rinse: The boy is splashed with water to clean the dust of his body. He was later reunited with his grandmother

Another neighbour Charity Adebayo said: "We heard a voice speaking that 'I am Judas Iscariot. The following day we asked for a ladder and found him. We discovered the poor boy."

The youngster has since been reunited with his grandmother.

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Off-duty Santa burgled in church on set of sci-fi horror shoot



SUPPLIED Chris Winchester in his Santa gear.



WARNER BROS/NEW LINE CINEMA Winchester, right, during a break in shooting on The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies, with fellow Laketowner Kristi Lofthus Kleijn.



SUPPLIED Winchesteras a dwarf Beatle, directing a spoof music video entitled Rescued By Eagles.

meets The Hobbit".

An off-duty Santa has been burgled in a church, on a Sunday, while shooting a sci-fi horror movie.

Chris Winchester, of Pukerua Bay, has been a Santa for four years and leant his lap to everyone from placid babies to Labour MP Kris Faafoi.

He finished his Santa shift at Harvey Norman in Porirua on December 11, then headed to a film shoot for his friend and short-film director Richard Turner.

While they were filming, his bag, containing a MacBook laptop, his wallet, and a sentimental silver guitar pick he'd been given when he was best man at a wedding, were stolen.

Two others working on the shoot had their bags stolen too.

Winchester, who is from Britain, spent the night getting hold of overseas authorities and cancelling credit cards, so got very little sleep before he was back in the Santa suit, entertaining.

"Although Santa had his bag stolen, it was very much 'the show must go on'," he said.

The cast and crew of the film shoot worked together as extras on Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* films. "We all ran away from the dragon."

Winchester was also in the process of writing a screenplay on his computer and editing a spoof music video he described as "The Beatles "It's based around the idea that everyone gets rescued by eagles. I keep trying to ask Peter Jackson if he could do a cameo biting a carrot."

Meanwhile, the generosity of strangers and his community had been heartening, he said. A neighbour had even set up a Givealittle page so the community could give back to its Santa.

Most of the items on the MacBook were backed up, but he could not replaced the guitar pick.

"If anybody sees the pick, it's a silver guitar plectrum, standard pick shape, and it has 'best man' engraved on it

"That's the only thing I really need back."

Anybody with information on the theft should contact Kapiti police on 04 296 6800.

- Stuff

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One of two teenage torturers could go to university under a new

dailymail.co.uk 10:05 EST, 19 December 2016 |

'Devil Boys' who tortured and sexually abused children aged nine and 11 were given new identities because judge ruled they had changed their ways with one planning a university career

- Pair now free were just 10 and 11 when they attacked boys, 9 and 11 in 2009
- They battered, strangled and sexually abused their victims in 90-minute attack
- Brothers granted lifelong anonymity after High Court judge ruled in their favour
- Judge says youngest boy says he is 'completely different' and wants to go to uni
- His older brother claimed he's 'equally committed to the path of rehabilitation'

By Martin Robinson, Uk Chief Reporter For Mailonline

One of two teenage brothers who tortured two young boys until they nearly died says he is a 'completely different' person and wants to go to university under a new name seven years after the 'sadistic' attack.

The 18-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons, told judge Sir Geoffrey Vos he had become 'the opposite of that person who did the crimes' in Edlington, South Yorkshire, in April 2009.

He said he 'fully acknowledged' the 'extreme gravity of his offences' and Sir Geoffrey was told that the man's older brother, now 19, was 'equally committed to the path of rehabilitation'.

Detail of the brothers' hopes and ambitions were revealed today after Sir Geoffrey Vos made orders barring journalists from revealing the brothers' identities earlier this month at the High Court in London.



The pair (sketched in court in 2010) – now free – were aged just ten (right) and 11 (left) when they attacked a boy of nine and his 11-year-old friend on isolated wasteland in 2009. The ten-year-old, now 18, has told a judge he wants to go to university without fear of being named

Police at the scene where two young boys aged 9 and 11 were attacked and badly beaten until they almost died

He has now published a written ruling explaining his reasoning for making those orders on

December.

ATTACKERS 'HAD NOWT ELSE TO DO' BUT ASSAULT BOYS

The brothers attacked the boys because they were 'bored' and had 'nowt else to do'.



And they only stopped battering their victims with an array of weapons because their arms were 'aching'.

Both told police they would have carried on if they had not been tired. Asked later how close they had come to killing either boy on a scale of one to ten, the older brother said: 'Perhaps eight or nine.'

The victims were throttled with cable, cut with barbed wire, battered with rocks and branches, covered in burning plastic sheeting,

had a cigarette plunged into an open wound and were punched, kicked and jumped on.

The brothers eventually walked off to meet their father, leaving the older victim lying motionless. When they had gone he told his nine-year-old friend: 'I can't see and I can't move my body. You go, and I'll just die here.'

The younger victim, covered in blood, found help and when paramedics reached his friend the 11year-old was said to have been minutes from death.

The brothers admitted robbery, grievous bodily harm with intent, inciting sexual acts and assault.

The pair – now free – were aged just ten and 11 when they attacked a boy of nine and his 11-yearold friend on isolated wasteland in 2009.

Despite battering, strangling and sexually abusing their victims in a 90-minute attack, they were granted anonymity until they both reached adulthood when they were jailed for a minimum of five years.

The brothers - who were nicknamed the 'Devil Boys', 'Hell Boys' and 'Torture Bruvs' - have got the same freedom from identification given to the two boys responsible for the 1993 killing of two-yearold James Bulger.

They used Article 3 of the Human Rights Act – which prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment – to support their claim.

The father of their oldest victim said he was incredulous that the brothers were using this section of the act to support their legal bid.

'They didn't give a thought to avoiding torture, inhumane or degrading treatment when they did what they did so it's taking the p*** for them to go to court arguing on those lines,' he said.

The brothers, who were held in separate secure units at a cost to taxpayers of more than £420,000 a year, have been released after the Parole Board decided they were no longer a public threat.

They officially changed their names prior to their release, leaving neighbours and friends unaware of their vile past.

Their lawyers claimed the teenagers 'will be subjected to serious harassment and persecution' if they are identified.

The father of the older victim fears the pair will re-offend and told the Mail that the pair should be identified.

'It's inhuman, what they did,' he said. 'Nobody would do that to another person unless there was something seriously wrong with their heads. People want to know who is living next to them – if they have maniacs down the road.'



Despite battering, strangling and sexually abusing their victims in a 90-minute attack, the boys (sketched in court) were granted anonymity until they both reached adulthood when they were jailed

The 11-year-old boy was found with critical head injuries after the attack in Edlington (pictured), South Yorkshire, in April 2009

The grandfather of the young victim, now 16, said the boy was 'still trying to put it behind him'.



He added: 'I don't agree that [the attackers] should be given lifelong anonymity after what they did.'

The two friends were subjected to a savage torture and beating ordeal involving bricks, lit cigarettes and a noose that left one of the victims barely alive.

The 11-year-old boy was found with critical head injuries after the attack in Edlington, South

Yorkshire, in April 2009. His nine-year-old friend was found wandering nearby with knife wounds.

The horrific assault was carried out while the culprits were supposedly under the care of scandal-hit Doncaster Social Services – and on the day that they should have been interviewed by police about an attack a week earlier.

Derek Wright, who helped the younger boy after finding him wandering the streets covered in blood and mud immediately after the attack, said the brothers should not receive anonymity.

Mr Wright said: 'I can still see his face when he was outside our house. Just his eyes and lips were visible, his face was covered in blood.

'They were animals and I've already told police I'm worried they'll do it again. Why should they have their identities protected?'

His wife Jean added: 'People should have a right to know who is living on their street. People ought to be aware so they can protect their kids.'



The stream in the Brick Ponds area of Edlington, South Yorkshire where one of the two young boys who was brutally attacked was found

Despite battering, strangling and sexually abusing their victims in a 90-minute attack, the brothers were granted anonymity

The brothers were locked up in separate units but were said to have been disruptive and had their privileges removed as punishment.



However, their lawyers now say that they have been rehabilitated and neither 'has displayed any aggression or violent behaviour in the community'.

They state that the older attacker, now aged 19, had 'some difficulties' in adjusting to normal life, but has built up a 'positive relationship' with his probation officer.

His brother, who turned 18 a fortnight ago, 'is beginning to build

the skills necessary for independent living'.

Sir Geoffrey said he was satisfied that the anonymity order was in the public interest.

He said neither the brothers' original names nor their new identities could be revealed in media reports of the case.



Comments (

cthroughit, Lancs, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

How much more can the UK become corrupt because its already at 100 %. All those who administrate Our Lives in whatever capacity should be shipped too Antarctica and let the frost take care of them

Arnachy99, Basle, Switzerland, about 9 hours ago

And the Great British justice system strikes again.

Elder, Halifax, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Until the next time! Watch this space.

Angelic Cynic, Sheffield, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

I remember this horror. I seem to recall the 2 boys had drug taking parents and were allowed to watch videos that they should not have seen. Being inculcated in that upbringing makes me feel this judge believes anything he hears - or reads from the experts. Awful for the victims and their loved ones. Mary Bell doesn't appear to have re-offended but she went inside as a child and was only released as an adult. Obviously when/if it all goes wrong there will not be any action taken against the judge/experts. Awful country.

cwwiss, weymouth, about 9 hours ago

A free ride for the rest of their lives. Crime pays. Monstrous outrageous crime pays even better apparently. Why am I honest? Can someone remind me please.

S7th Knight, Winchester, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

All Thanks to Everyone who Voted for... 'More of the Same'... Only Last Year....!

Andy of truth, Derby, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

A wasted opportunity to show that this type of behaviour can't go unpunished forever.

susieQ, london, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

It's alright boys, just say sorry the next time u offend. U won't get long. Sickness if they had been of colour or from the EU it would be whole different t story,

Kro, Belfast, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Absolutely ghastly. Those poor victims. The boys who carried this out will never reform, what judge is going to be responsible a few years down the line when these animals commit more atrocities

waitingtoemigrate, Brighton, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

And have their victims had all the time, money and expertise shoved their way?? Have they gone to Uni? Are they leading privileged lives?? I sincerely hope so.

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Back to life: Victorian re-enactors show how 19th century's lower classes looked as Brunel's SS Great Britain becomes a living ship once again

History group Ragged Victorians dressed up in MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories costume and roamed around the dock of the SS Great Britain

- The 15 actors brought the ship to life at the special snowy Christmas event, held at the weekend in Bristol
- Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed the famous ship, which was the world's first great luxury liner
- Paul Chibeba, of the SS Great Britain Trust, said families thorough enjoyed the Victorian **Christmas event**

By Isobel Frodsham For Mailonline

A ship designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel was brought to life at the weekend in a special Christmas event.

Actors from the award-winning living history group, the Ragged Victorians - The Great Unwashed, dressed up in costumes and roamed around the dock of the SS Great Britain, which is located in Bristol.

The cast of 15 characters, including a policeman, dock worker, fisherman's wife, swindler, fish seller and a rat catcher with live rats, acted out scenes throughout the weekend.

Brunel's famous SS Great Britain was one of the most important historic ships in the world. When she was launched in 1843 she was the world's first great luxury liner.

Painstakingly restored after being brought back from the Falkland Islands in 1970 after a transatlantic voyage back to her birthplace, the dry dock in the Great Western Dockyard in Bristol was where work started.

Paul Chibeba, head of marketing at the SS Great Britain Trust, said: 'It could be said that the Victorians invented the Christmas that families know today; many of the traditions that are now considered commonplace were started in the 1800s. We wanted to create that classic Christmas card scene this year with a beautifully decorated dockyard, Victorian characters and even falling snow!

'Families have really enjoyed bumping into their Victorian counterparts as we all celebrated an authentic Christmas with traditions that are still recognised today. To have a guaranteed white Christmas was a bonus, as we don't always get the opportunity to eat roasted chestnuts and drink hot chocolate in the snow.'



Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Britain, in Bristol, was brought to life again this weekend thanks to living history group the Ragged Victorians

The award-winning history group dressed up as their characters and acted out scenes in the dockland of the SS Great Britain, which was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel

The character Charlotte (left) is young woman who had huge hopes and dreams for herself when she was younger and took herself to London to start a career as a maid. However, she was taken advantage of and sadly began working as a prostitute to pay her debts. Right is the character Mrs Jones

Above is the character Rose Buckley, known as 'Slogger Rose', due to her ability of making and selling items in the street, as well as getting into bare knuckle fights with people over ale





The character Matilda 'Matty' Butcher sits with Mrs Jones while playing with holly. Matilda's life began as a privileged daughter of a clergyman in Surrey. However, to escape her strict family, she fell in with a bad crowd and began stealing to get by. She then married a conman, George







Butcher, and the two spend their days begging and committing crimes to get by

Victorian lampposts, 18th century beehives and Britain's... Pomp and ceremony: We reveal the history and grandeur of the...



The character John 'Sticky' Stickland was adopted from a young age to a caring family in Hampshire, and helped his father, Mr Stickland, make canes. However, when he began acting out aged 15, he left home and joined the army for thirty years. He then returned and set up a business with George (Butch) Butcher and Thomas 'Saltbox' Archer, but found himself falling into a life of petty crime. After a short stint in prison, he has started his own cane-making business but remains in debt to Saltbox

An actor holding the character baby James (left). Police Constable H.189 Ephraim Jordan

(right), who joined the police after helping an elderly gentlemen who was a victim of a robbery by Thomas 'Saltbox' Archer

Slogger Rose speaking to her husband, Saltbox. He is a famous crook. He is also a twin but while his brother is enrolled in the British Army, Saltbox spends his days committing crimes and being put in police cells

Mrs Jones and Matty Butcher stand and chat as the fake snow begins to fall on Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Britain







Mrs Jones works away on cutting up some fishing nets just in front of the ship, which was launched in 1843 and was the world's first iron-hulled, steam-powered passenger liner to use a screwpropellar

Charlotte (right) walks along the dock with another character who is holding baby James, the youngest character in the group

Paul Chibeba, head of marketing at the SS Great Britain Trust, said the trust wanted to create a

classic Christmas card scene with a beautifully decorated dockyard, Victorian characters and falling snow

FROM THE HIGH SEAS TO THE RAILWAYS: **BRUNELS GREATEST WORKS**

Isambard Kingdom Brunel was born in 1806 and died in 1859, aged 53.

Over the course of his relatively short life, from 1806 to 1859, Brunel was responsible for building over 25 railway lines, more than 100 bridges, eight piers and docks, and three enormous

steamships.





Born in Portsmouth to French civil engineer Sir Marc Isambard Brunel and Sophia Kingdom, Brunel was taught how to draw by his father and the pair later worked together on a project to create a tunnel under the River

Thames - a project overseen by Brunel senior with his son acting as an assistant engineer.

Brunel was a stand-out even in a field which included greats like George Stevenson - so-called father of the railways - and Thomas Cubitt - who helped build large parts of London, including Finsbury, Islington and Belgravia.

He constructed the Great Western Railway, linking London to Bristol, built the famous Bristol Meads Station, and designed five revolutionary suspension bridges including the Clifton Suspension Bridge over the River Avon.

While he is best known for his work on the railways, he was also an accomplished ship builder.

He built the the 'Great Western', which launched in 1837 and was the first steamship to ferry regular passenger journies across the Atlantic Ocean.





The 'Great Britain', launched in 1843, was the world's first ironhulled, steam-powered passenger liner to use a screw-propellar, which made it far more efficient.

The 'Great Eastern'. launched in 1859, was designed in cooperation with John Scott Russell, and was by far the biggest ship

ever built, but was so expensive it drove its owner into bankruptcy.



The 'Great Britain', launched in 1843, was the world's first iron-hulled, steam-powered passenger liner to use a screwpropellar, which made it far more efficient

Share what you think

The comments below have not been moderated.

Galahad, The Meadows, United States, about 8 hours ago

The 'Great Eastern', launched in 1859...was by far the biggest ship ever built" She was the biggest iron ship ever built.

Herby57, Bath, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

it's Temple Meads Station!

Hallberg, Birmingham, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

In the background of the last photo you can just see the replica of the "Matthew", the ship sponsored by London and Bristol merchants and captained by the Italian (Genoese) John Cabot in 1497 for the first English landing in North America. I wonder how he'd have fared here under current and future immigration rules?!

Lou-lou, London, about 12 hours ago

Its George Stephenson - with a PH not a V

Anubis, In the Dog house, about 13 hours ago

Such a shame Great Eastern didn't survive too. That would be something to see! Great Britain was a large ship by the standard of her day. Great Eastern made Great Britain look like a Tugboat!

Ken Yun Ofyamind, Sectionmarkedshirts, Haiti, about 13 hours ago

Tory Britain AGAIN (soon)

Mike 47, Castlegar B.C., Canada, about 13 hours ago

Please give it a rest, you're becoming a bore.

DR_, Belfast, Ireland, about 13 hours ago

AKA Brexiter Class.

Arq151, Worcester, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

charming and wonderful --

sarcastic, manuel antonio, Costa Rica, about 13 hours ago

Would have been nice to see pics of the inside the ship and more of the outside.

jeggo, schmallenberg, about 14 hours ago

Infamous ???? Please explain why

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'Monkey King' clings to side of city bus in China

upi.com



By Ben Hooper | Dec. 19, 2016 at 2:10 PM Follow @oddnewsupi



A man dressed as the mythological Monkey King hangs from the side of a bus in China. Screenshot: Newsflare

WUHU, China, Dec. 19 (UPI) -- A city bus in China was pulled over by police for an unusual reason -- a man hanging from the side of the vehicle in a "Monkey King" costume.

A video recorded in Wuhu, Anhui

Province, shows the "Monkey King," a popular character from Chinese mythology, seemingly clinging to the side of the city bus with only one hand.

The bus is stopped by police and it is revealed that the Monkey King is actually a man wearing an elaborate costume that was mounted to the side of the vehicle.

The Monkey King's ride was reportedly a publicity stunt organized by the owners of a shopping mall due to open in the area soon.

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Freezing temperatures turn Michigan lighthouse into tower of ice

upi.com



By Ben Hooper | Dec. 19, 2016 at 2:32 PM Follow @oddnewsupi



A lighthouse in St. Joseph, Mich., is completely encased in ice. Screenshot: Storyful

ST. JOSEPH, Mich., Dec. 19 (UPI) -- The winter weather chilling much of the United States was perfectly exemplified by a Lake Michigan lighthouse transformed into an ornate tower of ice.

The lighthouse in St. Joseph, Mich., was filmed Friday by the

Great Lakes Drone Company, which posted the video to YouTube.

The video shows the lighthouse has been covered in so much ice that it appears as though the structure is a fairy tale tower constructed from crystal.

Temperatures in the area remained low during the weekend, dipping below zero with the windchill.

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What to Do When Your Telepathic Leader Dies

thedailybeast.com 201612180515



What to Do When Your Telepathic Leader Dies

Share International is a passionate religious organization, but its future is unclear after its founder passed away this

12.17.16 9:15 PM ET

On an an early January night in 1959, Benjamin Creme first connected with the entity he now calls the

61218-Zavadski-share-international-tease

Master. That chance encounter set in motion a movement that has spanned decades, based on the idea that Creme receives telepathic communications from beyond.

His followers belong to an organization called Share International, a little-known but passionate organization that believes in the impending appearance of the World Teacher, who they call Maitreya. Their core beliefs include housing and food rights, healthcare and education, and a universal truth spanning all faiths. In short: sharing is caring, they say.

Creme died Oct. 24, at age 93, after decades of leading his small but devoted following. With him died the telepathic communications they believe connected him to Maitreya, a being who encompasses Christ, the Mahdi, Krishna, and the Messiah in one, according to believers. There is no apparent heir to his other-worldly transmissions, and it's unclear who will lead his followers as they await Maitreya.

Creme said that after that initial encounter in 1959, the Master told him about the forthcoming "Reappearance of Maitreya, the Christ, head of our planetary hierarchy," and his role in the plan. But, Creme said, he put those ideas to the side for over a decade.

In the 1970s, Creme said he began communicating with the Master again, sometimes undergoing telepathic transmissions for as many as 20 hours a day. "He forged in this period an instrument through whom he could work, and which would be responsive to his slightest impression," Creme wrote in his online biography. Despite this linkage, he insisted there was no infringement on his free will. Creme founded his first transmission meditation group in 1974 and built a glass and wood tetrahedron to use as a "transmitter-transformer instrument" that same year, as well as a "spiritual energy battery."

He soon began lecturing publicly and delivering the good news.

"When the Christ returns, he will not at first reveal his Presence, nor will the Masters who preceded him; but gradually, steps will be taken which will reveal to men that their lives among them now a man of outstanding, extraordinary potency, capacity for love and service, and with a breadth of view, far beyond the ordinary," the Master told Creme to say. "Those who can respond to his presence and his teaching will find themselves somewhat reflecting this love, this potency, this breadth of

vision, and will go into the world and spread abroad the fact that the Christ is in the world, and that men should look to that country from which a certain teaching is emanating. This will take place in a very, relatively, short period of time, and will lead to conclusive evidence that the Christ is in our midst."

That Christ-figure, Maitreya, created his human body—that of a South Asian male—in London in 1977. He moves among us but we don't know who he is, according to Share International followers.

"Preferring to be known simply as the Teacher, Maitreya has not come as a religious leader, but as an educator in the broadest sense — pointing the way out of humanity's most critical problems," the website states. "Maitreya does not intend to build a new religion around himself, nor to create followers, but to teach humanity 'the art of Self-realization."

Share International followers say Maitreya is the promised figure in every faith: the Messiah, Christ, and the Mahdi, to name a few.

But the very corporeal description of Maitreya has led to a number of sightings over the years. Followers widely believe that he appeared in 1988 at a church in Nairobi, wearing white robes at a gathering for prayer and healing.

"We are nearing the time for the reign of heaven. But before that I shall come back and bring a bucketful of blessings for all of you," the man reportedly said.

The appearances kept coming.

When a Share International representative sidled up to this Daily Beast reporter at a conference earlier this year, he excitedly proclaimed that he had been in the presence of Maitreya. He knew the speaker he'd heard a few years ago was the figure touted by Creme by the ideas the man espoused, he said.

But the yearning for Maitreya has also turned into headaches for the group and those misidentified.

The group's adherents mistakenly identified a man as Maitreya just a few years ago. Raj Patel, an economist and food activist, was surprised to one day find followers of the belief system approaching him after public appearances.

He eventually had to write a post on his blog—and in The Guardian—disavowing any link to the figure known as Maitreya.

"I always wanted to be a Prince of Something. But when opportunity comes knocking, it turns out it's to get me to sign for a package for some other dude," Patel wrote. "Sadly, I'm not the Messiah. I'm just a very naughty boy."

Creme disavowed the Patel incident as a case of followers gone rogue. "I would like to make clear that we at Share International have absolutely nothing to do with this mistaken identity and we regret the inconvenience caused," he wrote in the Guardian. He cited Patel's politics—a commitment to "sharing, fraternity, justice, and co-operation"—as "part of the reason for this stilly misidentification."

The Share International website lists 239 appearances by Maitreya between 1988 and 2002. But that year, Maitreya's appearances were "halted temporarily." The appearances happened before

Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists, according to the site.

Yet, for all of Share International's science fiction-like ideology, an overzealous thirst to identify Maitreya may be the worst of its sins. Tax forms for Share International USA obtained by The Daily Beast identify a small budget—and, as a non-religiously-exempt organization, are readily available. It's U.S. headquarters are on the West Coast, along with a Benjamin Creme art museum.

In its membership magazines, Share International writes about food justice, environmental issues, and other progressive causes. The November 2016 issue included an interview with anti-fracking filmmaker and activist Josh Fox, and another proclaiming a global family by citing a viral video about DNA.

Creme, the founder of the movement and communicator with the Masters, died in October. But Todd Lorentz, the group's USA spokesman, told The Daily Beast that his passing wouldn't change their mission.

"Very little will change in terms of the immediate work going forward and the various groups worldwide will continue undeterred in their ongoing efforts," Lorentz said. "In fact, the events unfolding worldwide at this time demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, the conditions foretold on countless occasions to precede the emergence of Maitreya and His subsequent Day of Declaration."

And while they await Maitreya's emergence, followers have one last message sent from him to Creme in March 2016, "by a process of mental telepathy."

"Judge for yourselves, My brothers, how close you are to My expectations of a new world," Maitreya said through Creme. "This will be a world in which all men are one, in which all men fulfil the joy of creation, and fulfil with love their capacity to show the way to their brothers in simplicity and truth."

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8 weird things that have happened during the festive season through history

historyextra.com Thursday 22nd December 2016



 \nearrow It's a time for gifts, last-minute shopping, and over-indulgence. But through history the festive season hasn't just been about celebration: here, Graeme Donald, author of On This Day in History, reveals eight of the weirdest things that have happened during

the Christmas period through history...

This article was first published online in December 2014



A newspaper article reporting the mysterious disappearance of the novelist Agatha Christie. (Getty)

3 December 1926 – Gone girl

English crime novelist Agatha Christie disappears, possibly in an attempt to get her adulterous husband, Archie, arrested for her 'murder'. Abandoning her car in the countryside, she hides in a hotel under a false name for 11 days while the police scour the nation. What happened in those days remains a mystery.

8 December 1660 - The play's the thing

Margaret Hughes appears as Desdemona in *The* Moor of Venice – a reworking of Shakespeare's Othello – at London's Vere Street Theatre, possibly making her England's first professional actress. Prior to this, boy actors generally aged between 13

and 19 played women's roles in the theatre. It is thought that due to differences in diet and lifestyle in the Elizabethan period, boy's voices did not break until much later. This enabled male actors to play female roles convincingly into their late teens.

18 December 1737 – The bills are alive with the sound of music

Master violinmaker Antonio Stradivari dies in Cremona, Italy. It is estimated that he made about 1,000 instruments in his life – about 500 of them violins that are still in use. They are valued at about £2 million each.

22 December 1938 - Something's fishy

Believed extinct for 80 million years, a coelacanth is caught by a South African fisherman. A coelacanth's brain is 98.5 per cent fat, with only 1.5 per cent reserved for brain tissue. Only two species of coelacanth are today known to exist, and the Indonesian coelacanth is classified as vulnerable.

23 December 1888 - A bittear dispute

Distraught after arguments with his friend and fellow artist Paul Gauguin, Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh cuts off part of his left ear before wrapping it in newspaper and taking it to a brothel where, according to the local newspaper, he asks a girl called Rachel to keep it safe.

24 December 1965 - What's that in the sky?

A flaming mass arcs over the UK. The meteor, about the size of an office desk, is fortunately shattered into thousands of meteorites by its own sonic boom as it enters the atmosphere to shower the village of Barwell near Leicester. No injuries are reported.

25 December 1865 - Tis not the season of goodwill...

Formed yesterday in Pulaski, Tennessee, the Ku Klux Klan holds its first gathering. The six founding members were classically educated and mainly of Scottish heritage, so they based the name on the Greek word 'kuklos', meaning circle.



1866: A wood engraving depicting two members of the Ku Klux Klan. The white sheet and hood were supposed to represent the ghosts of Confederate soldiers risen from the dead to seek revenge. Formed in Pulaski, Tennessee, the Ku Klux Klan held its first meeting on 25 December 1865. (MPI/Getty Images)

1 January 404 – Partners for afterlife

The last gladiatorial games are staged in Rome. The games evolved from the funeral of Brutus in 264 BC, at which men fought to the death to provide him with an escort in the afterlife.

On This Day in History by Graeme Donald (Michael O'Mara Books) is on sale now. To find out more, click here.

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13 Items Labeled "American" in Other Countries

mentalfloss.com

In 2016, Budweiser renamed its beer "America" for the summer, an attempt to take advantage of the wave of patriotic sentiment associated with Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. The creative director responsible for the rebranding explained: "We thought nothing was more iconic than Budweiser and nothing was more iconic than America."

America is certainly iconic, and a worldwide brand of sorts, but it doesn't carry the same connotations everywhere. Here are 13 things described with "American" in other countries.

1. CINTA AMERICANA // "AMERICAN TAPE"

In Spain, the versatile, do-anything tool we call duct tape is known as *cinta americana*, or "American tape."

2. POING AMÉRICAIN // "AMERICAN FIST"

In French, a set of brass knuckles are le poing américain, or "the American fist."

3. ALFACE AMERICANA // "AMERICAN LETTUCE"

Brazilian Portuguese has the term *alface americana*, or "American lettuce," to refer to iceberg lettuce—or, as my cousin Jairo informs me, "lettuce like McDonald's uses."

4. AMERIKANSKIE GORKI // "AMERICAN MOUNTAINS"

In Russian, roller coasters are known as *amerikanskie gorki*, or "American mountains." Interestingly, in most of the Romance languages they are known as "Russian mountains."

5. AMERIŠKA SOLATA // "AMERICAN SALAD"

The Slovenians call cole slaw *ameriška solata*, or "American salad," as do other countries in Eastern Europe.

6. KHAO PAD AMERICAN // "AMERICAN FRIED RICE"

The *khao pad American* served in Thailand is rarely found in American Thai restaurants. The rice is fried with ketchup or tomato sauce, and might be mixed with raisins and peas. It is served with some combination of fried chicken, bacon, hot dogs, ham, and croutons. Apparently, it was created during the Vietnam War when many Americans were stationed in Thailand, and the dish went on to become Thai comfort food.

7. AMERIKAANSE STOCK // "AMERICAN STOCK"

In Belgium, stores that carry camping and hunting equipment, tools, boots, military surplus, and sporting goods often go by *Amerikaanse Stock*, or "American stock."

8. WOLNA AMERYKANKA // "FREE AMERICAN"

Wolna amerykanka, or "free American," is a style of catch-as-catch-can, no-restrictions wrestling in Poland. The phrase also has the more general sense of "all bets are off" or anything goes.

9. AMERIKAANSE FUIF // "AMERICAN PARTY"

In Dutch, a casual potluck where everyone brings a dish is called an *amerikaanse fuif*, or "American party." Brazil also uses *festa americana* to describe this type of event.

10. COCINA AMERICANA // "AMERICAN KITCHEN"

In Spain, the open plan style of kitchen is called an "American kitchen," as opposed to the traditional style of kitchen closed off by a wall.

11. AMERIKANDOGGU // "AMERICAN DOG"

In Japanese, a hot dog is a *hottodoggu*, but a corn dog is an *amerikandoggu*.

12. TOVAGLIETTE ALL'AMERICANA // "AMERICAN PLACEMATS"

In Italian, a *tovaglia* is a table cloth. A *tovaglietta all'americana*, literally "little American tablecloth," is a placemat. In Brazil, placemats are also considered American; sets of them are called *jogo americano*, or "American set."

13. AMERIKAANSE TOESTANDEN // "AMERICAN CONDITIONS"

The Dutch have an easy phrase to pull out when talking about huge gaps between rich and poor, lack of healthcare or education access, school shootings, or a range of other situations, including, probably, cans of beer labeled "America." *Amerikaanse toestanden*, or "American conditions," are something to be warned against, as in, "let's be careful with this decision and not get ourselves a bad case of American conditions."

Linguist, author of *In the Land of Invented Languages*, living in Chicago, doing her part to fight off the cot-caught merger and keep "gym shoes" alive.

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The Washington Post

Post Nation

A lobster boat captain said a freak storm killed his crew. Then doctors found drugs in his system.

By Cleve R. Wootson Jr. December 20 at 6:31 AM

Christopher Hutchinson said he had no idea the storm would grow so strong so fast.

It was November 2014, and Hutchinson, 28, had set out in his 45-foot lobster boat, a fiberglass craft called No Limits.

He wanted to check on 15 traps in Eleven Mile Ridge, a popular lobstering area off the coast of Maine. Two crewmen manned the boat with him — Tomas Hammond, 26, and Tyler Sawyer, 15.

They arrived at dawn on a Saturday morning and began pulling up traps, but the weather worsened.

Hutchinson told the <u>Portland Press Herald</u> that he checked the conditions around 10 a.m. and found the wind blowing at a barely manageable 22 knots.

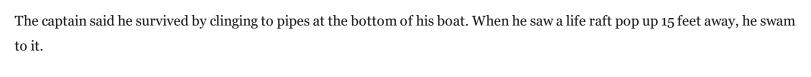
The men called off the expedition and began to head for shore — but it was too late.

"We got hit by one large wave, and that pushed us into another. The windows to the wheelhouse blew out, and we began taking on water quickly," Hutchinson told the Bangor Daily News.

Court documents say a nearby weather buoy reported winds of 40 knots, and waves 14 feet high.

The large lobster boat flipped. Hammond and Sawyer were nowhere to be found.

"I'm not 100 percent sure what happened next, but the next thing I recall is being in the wheelhouse and the boat is upside down in the water," Hutchinson told the newspaper.



- The crewmen, on the other hand, were gone.
- "I kept screaming for Tom and Tyler, but I didn't hear or see them again."
- The Coast Guard found Hutchinson floating in the raft just after 4 p.m. He was alone.
- After a search, officials declared Hammond and Sawyer lost at sea.
- "I've never seen the wind and seas pick up so fast," Hutchinson told the Press Herald.
- But prosecutors say Hutchinson's story of death and survival omitted important details ones that point to his guilt.
- Hutchinson is charged with two counts of seaman's manslaughter, a law from the 1800s that applies when a ship officer's negligence leads to a crewman's death.
- He made his first court appearance Monday and could spend three years in prison for each death. His attorney did not respond to a message from The Washington Post seeking comment.
- After Hutchinson was rescued and flown to a hospital, doctors took a sample of his blood, according to an indictment filed last week. They found Oxycodone in his system and THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. Prosecutors say he drank alcohol and consumed the drugs the night before he pulled the boat out of Tenants Harbor for the last time.
- Catastrophically, prosecutors say, he also ignored weather warnings.
- "Prior to the No Limits departure, the National Weather Service was predicting and warning of adverse and dangerous marine weather and sea conditions in the area," the indictment says. "Marine weather forecasts, watches and warnings [were] continuously broadcast on radio."
- Prosecutors claim Hutchinson was also negligent in employing a 15-year-old boy, a complicated and sensitive issue among people who make their living catching lobsters.
- Commercial lobstering is a lucrative business in Maine it's also one of the state's most dangerous jobs.
- Lobstermen caught <u>nearly half a billion dollars worth of lobster</u> last year in Maine, according to the state, which produced 90 percent of the nation's lobster.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "commercial fishing is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States with a fatality rate 39 times higher than the national average."

Lobstermen routinely handle weighted traps that are up to 100 pounds apiece, connected by ropes that whiz across a ship's deck, pulled by a power hydraulic hauler, said Patrice McCarron, the executive director of the Maine Lobstermen's Association.

"God forbid you get entangled in that rope and go overboard," she said. "'Man overboard' is the most dangerous situation for lobstermen."

For men on the boat, even safety equipment can be hazardous, especially if it gets entangled in a rope or a Lobster trap.

"Many lobstermen will carry a knife in their overalls upside down, so if they fall overboard, you can pull this knife out and cut yourself free," McCarron said. "But you can bang your head. You can go overboard unconscious."

And those dangers can be amplified by bad weather and a dynamic sea.

Still, having children and teens on a boat is not uncommon or frowned upon. Children can get sponsored for a student or apprentice license when they are just 8 years old, McCarron said. The apprenticeship programs, which are often used by small family operations, help lobstermen pass on the caveats of a centuries-old tradition.

It's not unusual to see children and teens working on boats during the summer months or on school vacations to earn extra cash.

McCarron said she didn't know many of the details of Hutchinson's incident in November 2014.

"I know that was a loss that hit the industry really, really hard," she said. "We lost a 15-year-old, and the other crewman had a small child."

Last year, the families of the dead men settled with Hutchinson and his crew for \$310,000, according to the Rockland Courier-Gazette.

The story says the men who died weren't wearing safety equipment when the wave broke through the wheelhouse window and washed over the deck.

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Cleve Wootson is a general assignment reporter for The Washington Post.

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A Nazi grave in the jungle: Hitler's explorers went on secret quest to carve out a colony



SIMON ROMERO, THE NEW YORK TIMES | December 23, 2016 1:47 PM ET More from The New York Times

An enduring air of mystery surrounds the towering cross emblazoned with a swastika in a cemetery near the remote Brazilian jungle outpost of Laranjal do Jari. An inscription on the cross, in German, reads: "Joseph Greiner died here of fever on Jan. 2, 1936, in the service of German research."

Why is there a Nazi grave in the far reaches of Brazil's Amazon rain forest?

Researchers have meticulously documented how Nazi war criminals fled to South America in the aftermath of World War II. But much less is known about a plot that took root before and during the war: The Nazis hoped to establish a German bridgehead in South America by conquering a swath of the Amazon River Basin.

The secret plan, called the Guyana Project, had its origins in an expedition into the Amazon led by Otto Schulz-Kampfhenkel, a Berlin zoologist, documentary filmmaker and member of Hitler's SS.

For 17 months, from 1935 to 1937, Nazi explorers under the guidance of Schulz-Kampfhenkel hacked through forests around Brazil's border with French Guiana. They collected animal skulls and indigenous jewelry, and they studied the topography along the Jari River, a 491-mile tributary of the Amazon.



A Nazi grave in Lúcio Costa Leite / New York Times photo illustration Laranjal do Jari,

Brazil that eath: "Joseph Greiner died here of fever on Jan 2, 1936, in the service of German research." The alternate image has been enhanced for legibility.



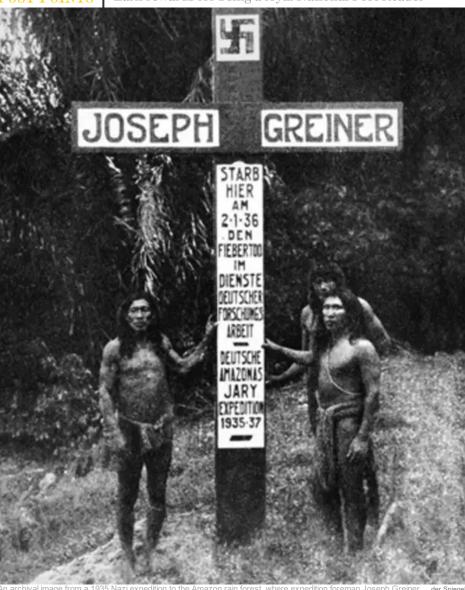
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An archival image from a 1935 Nazi expedition to the Amazon rain forest, where expedition foreman Joseph Greiner der Spieg died of an unspecified fever. The three-metre grave endures.

"The expedition started out with the usual scientific pretensions," said Jens Glusing, a longtime correspondent in Brazil for the German magazine Der Spiegel who wrote a book about the Guyana Project. "But back in Germany, as the war started, Schulz-Kampfhenkel seized on this idea for Nazi colonial expansion."

Schulz-Kampfhenkel presented his plan in 1940 to Heinrich Himmler, the chief of the SS and the Gestapo. It envisioned the endeavour as a way to blunt the regional sway of the United States by seizing control of French Guiana and the neighbouring Dutch and British colonies (now the independent nations of Suriname and Guyana).

But the dream of forging a German Guiana fizzled. Perhaps it was because French Guiana had already fallen into the friendly hands of the collaborationist Vichy regime.

Related

'Hitler actually wasn't that bad': How Neo-Nazis are using attractive young women to boost their movement

Or maybe it had to do with the ill-fated Jari expedition itself.

The expedition had a Heinkel He 72 Seekadett seaplane, which was promoted as an example of Nazi industrial innovation. But the aircraft capsized after hitting driftwood a few weeks into the expedition.

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The Germans were enfeebled by malaria and other illnesses. Schulz-Kampfhenkel endured severe diphtheria, and an unspecified fever killed Greiner, the expedition's foreman. His grave stands to this day as a testament to the star-crossed Nazi foray into the Amazon.

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About 70 employees get sick after health department party

yahoo.com

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — The New Mexico Department of Health says dozens of its employees became sick after its holiday party.

The New Mexican reports (http://bit.ly/2hTiNvn) that about 70 staff members say they had gastrointestinal issues after the luncheon last week. A spokesman says more than 200 employees attended the catered luncheon at the Harold Runnels Building in Santa Fe.

Health Secretary Lynn Gallgher said Monday that investigators have not identified a specific contaminated food. She told her staff that the outbreak appears likely to have been caused by bacillus cereus or clostridium perfingens. Both can cause food-borne illness.

Epidemiologists are awaiting the results of laboratory test.

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An Art Lover's Guide to Nevada



There are strange and beautiful creations in the desert and beyond.

Sponsored by TravelNevada December 20, 2016



It's easy to associate the artistic centers of the world with grand metropolitan cities, but Nevada's vast desert landscape serves as the perfect blank canvas for artists. From sculptures to photography, there is striking art to be found in museums, warehouses, and city centers throughout the state. And that's not to mention the creations in Nevada's caves and beautiful desert, which have been decorated from the prehistoric era all the way up until the

present day. With that in mind, here are six creative gems hidden throughout the Silver State.



The figures at Szukalski's Last Supper. a200/a77Wells/CC BY 2.0

Albert Szukalski's Last Supper BEATTY, NEVADA

In the valley below Daylight Pass, the Goldwell Open Air Museum draws surprisingly large crowds to its location in the middle of nowhere. Its "genesis piece" is Albert Szukalski's "Last Supper," a ghostly take on Da Vinci's famous painting. The figures of Christ and the apostles, as well as the table, have all been removed, leaving only

floating shrouds. The sculpture, installed in 1981, was predicted to only last two years at most, but it miraculously still stands, now flanked by other gigantic statues.



2. Seven Magic Mountains

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

In an obscure patch of dusty desert ten miles outside of Las Vegas, the 30-foot-tall "Seven Magic Mountains" tower against the horizon. These neon totems are a public art installation by Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone. He used locally sourced boulders and chose this remote location (Ivanpah Valley) because it is "physically and symbolically mid-way between the natural and the artificial."

The Generator. Dylan Thuras/Atlas Obscura



3. The Generator

SPARKS, NEVADA

It's hard to say exactly what gets made inside The Generator, a communal workshop in Sparks. Aquaponic herb gardens, hot air balloons, giant dinosaur puppets, and, of course, massive installation sculptures and vehicles for the annual Burning Man festival have all come out of the workspace. The Generator and the projects made inside it are funded largely by donations and grants. Tools and labor are also volunteered. It represents a socioeconomic shift occurring in Sparks and the greater Reno area. "The Biggest Little City in the World" is being populated with innovative tech start

ups. This is apparent on a microcosmic level in The Generator: artists are given a designated workspace all their own within the discrete stations for woodworking, agriculture, bronze-casting, painting, etc. and function as a hive to support one another.



A cadillac in the monument, PunkToad/CC BY 2.0

4. Thunder Mountain Monument

IMLAY, NEVADA

World War II veteran and police officer Frank Van Zant moved to the desert outside Imlay, renamed himself "Chief Rolling Thunder" and began production on his life's work: Thunder Mountain Monument. Using sand, cement, and scrap metal, Van Zant created a house, a three-story hostel, and a massive sculpture park. He died in 1989 and left the monument to his son, who cleaned it up and made it accessible to visitors. Some have even contributed to the monument.



Akhob as viewed from the outside. Courtesy of matthewredefined

5. Akhob

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Hidden behind the Las Vegas Louis Vuitton store is James Turrell's "Akhob." Unlike the fluorescent shelves of the designer handbag store, the art installation is a series of circular openings leading into two huge chambers filled with slowly shifting, rotating "light fields." Visitors are bathed in gentle, brilliant light. Vibrant hues shift imperceptibly from one to another, bleeding in and out of each other on a cycle that lasts 24 minutes. At times, the precise combination of colors makes it nearly impossible

to find the door through which one just entered.

Kate Raudenbush's "Guardian of Eden" outside the Nevada Museum of Art. Travel Nevada/CC BY 2.0

6. Nevada Museum of Art

RENO, NEVADA



The Nevada Museum of Art is the only accredited art museum in the state, though its collection is large enough to fill several institutions. The museum has over 2,000 pieces of art ranging from the 19th to 21st century, but rather than organizing the collection by style or form, the curators present the works in a fashion that examines the relationship between humans and their environment. The pieces include everything from aerial landscape photography shot by drone to traditional paintings of women and animals in nature. Another highlight is the massive Burning Man sculptures works transplanted from the Black Rock Desert into the museum's outdoor sculpture garden.

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Artist Fixes Damaged Objects By Placing Them in Beehives | The Creators Project vice.com

Artist Fixes Damaged Objects By Placing Them in Beehives

Anna Marks — May 27 2016



All images courtesy of Peter Dyck

These honeycomb encrusted sculptures look like they're 3D printed or shaped by a sculptor's hands but all have been built by nature's most efficient designers: bees. Canadian artist Aganetha Dyck is the woman behind these wax-covered objects with over 20 years experience working with beekeepers, scientists, and hundreds of bee collaborators.

Dyck's work reflects the evolution of design today, where due to advancements in technology we can manipulate nature as an effective tool to produce elaborate artwork. Dyck has an inherent interest in collectibles and memorabilia and her personal work mirrors this fascination. Her honeycomb covered collection exhibits a

range of items including Edwardian figurines, helmets, shoes and sports equipment that look as though they ought to be sitting within an old curiosity shop.



Dyck tells The Creators Project, "Throughout my life I've had an interest in figurines and collectibles. I wondered about dust and dusting of figurines and of the glass cabinets containing these untouchable treasures. These collectibles were beyond my reach as a child and adult alike." But Dyck's object choices are also political. "Choosing sports equipment is a reaction to the press discussing the importance of sports and their related public funding vs artists and cultural workers and their public funding." By using relatable items, Dyck explores the relationship between the natural world and humanity; the shared dependency we have with different species that as humans we're essentially at the mercy of. Her sculptures are visual representations of this dependent communication.



Dyck deliberately chooses broken objects from second-hand markets and covers specific areas of the piece to attract the bees before placing them in the hive. She asserts that honeybees pay attention to details while "mending" the damaged parts with their honeycomb layers. She says, "While working with honeybees I discovered their methods of construction and their ability to mend the hive's cracks and crevices with honeycomb, wax and propolis. I thought of the vast number of damaged figurines in antique shops and second-hand stores. I knew honeybees were masters of mending and decided to give a selection of these now unwanted, damaged, figurines to the honeybees. I was surprised that once the honeybees had mended the objects, the figurines became collectibles again."



This method requires a lot of patience and understanding of the species, as Dyck tells us. "My patience is due to the honeybees themselves. They have routines; they must not be disturbed any more than necessary and only for a few minutes at a time." These pieces evoke thought over our Western lifestyle; how we are often quick to throw away something without mending it, with lack of thought and patience.



Dyck's work highlights the natural world that we often take for granted and what it can be used to create. Her project helps us understand the importance of pollinators, which are essential for plant growth in order to feed the world's ever-increasing population. As Dyck tells us, "It appears that human nature requires patience in realizing that we have environmental issues which we are responsible for. The basic question I ask is: What are the ramifications for all living beings should honeybees disappear from Earth?"



To view more of Dyck's work click here.

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT DECEMBER 21, 2016 5:46 PM

Bevin declares 2017 the 'Year of the Bible' in Kentucky





BY JACK BRAMMER jbrammer@herald-leader.com

FRANKFORT — The "Year of the Bible" will apparently last 24 months in Kentucky.

Gov. Matt Bevin has declared 2017 the "Year of the Bible" in Kentucky even though he proclaimed 2016 the "Year of the Bible" last December.

Both proclamations pleased Pastor Mark Harrell of Victory Christian Fellowship church in Somerset, who said Wednesday that Bevin's actions are in support of a statewide Bible reading marathon.

The "Kentucky 120 United Bible Reading Marathon" is a statewide event to get people in all 120 Kentucky counties to read aloud the entire Bible in the first three or so days of the new year.

Harrell founded the effort with aid from a group of clergy known as the Kentucky Prayer Focus.

"We had the Bible-reading marathon last January and the governor and his family participated," Harrell said. "He wanted it again. We are fortunate to have such a governor."

Harrell said he and Democratic state Rep. Tom Riner of Louisville, who also is a Baptist minister, asked Bevin to sign the proclamation for 2017 and "he graciously accepted as he did last year."

Riner wrote the proclamation, Harrell said.

The governor's proclamation, which he signed Dec. 19, says 2017 "marks the second year Kentucky has led the nation in celebrating the Bible's significant impact on Kentucky and American institutions and culture by leaders in each county taking shifts to read through the entire Bible in Kentucky's Bible Reading Marathon beginning Jan. 1, 2017."

It also contains quotes from Presidents Lincoln, Truman and Reagan and first U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Jay on the Bible's influence on America.

"We're trying to get all people in one accord in God's Word," said Harrell.

He said readers in the marathon will include government officials, students and jail inmates, among others.

"At midnight Jan. 1, someone in a county will read from the Bible for 15 minutes and then someone else and then someone else and so on until the entire Bible is read aloud," Harrell said. "It will take about 3 1/2 days to do this."

So far, people in 72 Kentucky counties have indicated they will participate, said Harrell. "Last January, we had 90 counties but more time to prepare for it."

Harrell said he initially was not planning to hold the marathon in back-to-back years, but Bevin requested it again.

Frank Lovell Jr., a board member of Louisville Atheists and Freethinkers, said he is "disappointed but not surprised" by Bevin's actions.

"He can believe whatever he wants to but I just don't think an agent of the government should be signing such a proclamation," said Lovell.

Anyone interested in participating, Harrell said, can call his church at 606-677-1100 to get more information.

Jack Brammer: (502) 227-1198, @BGPolitics

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The strange inspirations behind Greek myths

By Ella Davies 21 December 2016

bbc.com



There are many strange stories in Odysseus's long journey home after the sack of Troy, but where do they come from?



Many of us know the well-told ancient Greek story with the wooden horse, but how well do you know its

sequel? Homer's *Odyssey* recounts what happened after the sack of Troy, specifically Odysseus's epic voyage home. It might be fictional but according to the experts it still provides valuable insights into the reality of life in ancient times, including the flora and fauna.

Our hero's return encompasses ten years of island-hopping troubled by vengeful gods, ravenous monsters, seductive nymphs and trippy spells. It is a classic tale that has fascinated scholars since it was published in the 8th Century BC.

In true scientific style, researchers have scoured the text for meaning and dedicated themselves to explaining the most striking parts of the story. In some cases, the truth is remarkably close to the fiction.

Lotus eaters

One of the early wrong turns comes when strong northerly winds carry Odysseus off course to the land of the lotus-eaters. The sailors enjoy the local delicacy so much that they forget about returning home and Odysseus has to drag them back to the ships. There are multiple theories for what the lotus could be, such as strong wine or opium.

Another contender is a plant called *Diospyros lotus* – the scientific name means "fruit of the gods". The fruits in question are round and yellow with succulent flesh that is said to taste like a cross between a date and a plum. That explains its common name: "date plum". But could tasty fruit be enough to convince Odysseus's men to stay put forever?

Could Odysseus and his crew have enjoyed these fruits - Diospyros lotus? (Credit: Aaron Bastin/Alamy)

After a rough journey the hospitality and nutrition would no doubt be welcome, but another candidate for the irresistible lotus could explain its appeal. In his book *The Lotus Quest* plant expert Mark Griffiths identifies Homer's fruit as *Ziziphus lotus*, a jujube that reputedly has psychoactive properties.



Both species are well known at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew in London, but experts there put forward another possibility – the water lily (*Nymphaea* sp.) that grows along the Nile.

This plant was frequently depicted in ancient Egyptian art and the blue variety (*N. caerulea*) is particularly known as a narcotic. Consuming the plant is said to induce a state of peaceful apathy and it is classed as

a banned substance in some European countries today. Whether its reputation was enough for Homer to have got wind of it on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea remains to be debated.

Cyclops

Searching for supplies on another island, Odysseus and some of his crew encounter Polyphemus, a man-eating giant. Several sailors perish before Odysseus eventually manages to blind the monster with a single stake to his only eye.

Possessing just one eye is a rarity among creatures with a backbone. In mammals, cyclopia is described as a congenital disorder where the orbits of the eyes fail to develop into two separate cavities. Associated complications for the brain, nose and respiratory system mean few born with the condition survive.

To address the "giant" aspect of the mythical cyclops, historian Adrienne Mayor of Stanford University, US, suggests the fossilised remains of ancient species could have provided inspiration. As farmers, the ancient Greeks would have explored the landscape and could have made some unusual discoveries. In particular, the skulls of dwarf elephants and mammoths have an enlarged nasal cavity that could have been mistaken for the sole eye-socket of a beastly foe.



Polyphemus was said to be a maneating giant (Credit: Ivan Vdovin/Alamy)

"Island caves do contain the unfamiliar fossils of dwarf mammoths, surrounded by heaps of mammal bones that in antiquity were taken as the bones of the one-eyed giant's victims," says Mayor.

Adrian Lister, a paleobiologist at the Natural History Museum, London,

confirms that the remains of dwarf elephants have been found on many of the islands in the Mediterranean. He explains that the 10-tonne, 4-metre-high elephant *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* would have travelled from the mainland to the islands at times of low sea level. Once isolated, the elephants had to adapt to survive with less space and food and so became dwarfed.

"In Sicily we have fossils of at least three different sizes of dwarf elephants," says Lister. "The smallest – *Palaeoloxodon falconeri* – were among the smallest found anywhere. Many other islands in the Mediterranean have a similar story – *P. antiquus* got dwarfed to greater or lesser degrees. We find the dwarf elephants on Malta, Crete, Cyprus and several of the smaller Greek islands. Dwarf mammoths are rarer but we have them on Crete and Sardinia. For both the mammoths and the straight-tusked elephants, the smallest are around 1.2m (shoulder height) and 120 kg."

Circe's magic

When they are swept into the company of the sorceress Circe, the adventurers are drugged and penned up like swine. Fortunately Odysseus is protected from her spell by eating a holy herb called moly.

Botanists point to jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*) as the ingredient that makes the sailors act so strangely. The plant is related to belladonna and deadly nightshade, and contains toxic alkaloids that block neurotransmitters in the brain. If ingested, it causes hallucinations, delirium and amnesia as the brain struggles to send and receive messages.



Jimson weed (Datura stramonium) contains toxic alkaloids (Credit: David Stuckel/Alamy)

Homer is quite specific in his description of moly: it has a black root and white flower. But that in itself is not an uncommon combination, so there has been much discussion over its identity. Based on its ability to neutralise the drug Circe dishes out, researchers believe the snowdrop (Galanthus

nivalis) is another very likely candidate.

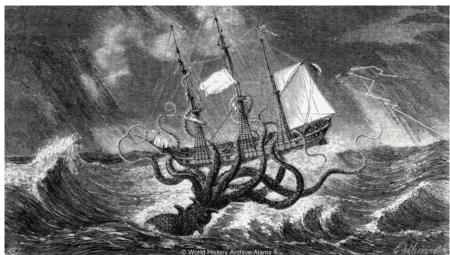
The flower was known to grow in the region and contains the substance galantamine, which counteracts the effects of stramonium poisoning. Scientists have been studying it since the 1950s. It is now used in the treatment of Alzheimer's and dementia, because it can help to balance chemicals in the brain.

Scylla

The sailors take on even more terrible opponents when they pass through a narrow channel. They are confronted by Scylla, a multi-headed monster with attitude. Homer describes this cave-dwelling beast as possessing 12 legs and six necks, each with a ferocious man-eating head that sports three-rows of teeth.

Over time Scylla has been conflated with the kraken – all those necks and legs could after all, be tentacles. But giant squid are a rarity in the Mediterranean and besides, Scylla lives in a cave halfway up a cliff, which is no place for any ocean species.

Polycephaly is the biological term for having multiple heads. While it is rare in humans, it happens more frequently among reptiles. Damage to the embryo is thought to cause cells to duplicate so two heads grow, or to fuse so that twin embryos become partially combined.



Giant squid are rare in the Mediterranean (Credit: World History Archive/Alamy)

Aristotle recorded a two-headed snake in 350 BC and the oldest surviving evidence is an embryonic lizard fossil from the Cretaceous of China. While the condition is often life-limiting for wild animals, it is possible Homer may have heard of it, or even witnessed it.

Then there is the use of snakes as biological weapons. There is at least one historical record of snakes being unleashed during a naval battle, by Hannibal fighting the Eumenes. Zoologist Gianni Insacco of Milan's Natural History Museum suggests the ancient Greeks might have employed this tactic too. He was part of the team that rediscovered the Javelin sand boa in Sicily, a species thought to have been introduced to the island by the Greeks for ritual and warfare purposes.

While there is no known Scylla monster, the poet skillfully combined stressed sailors, our unease with unusual biological development and the threat of snakes to create a monstrous cocktail.

Charybdis

Odysseus and his crew are officially between a rock and a hard place, because opposite Scylla lies Charybdis. This monstrous whirlpool regularly drinks down sea water and anything sailing upon it.

It might surprise you to learn that Charybdis was marked on naval charts into the 19th Century, just off the north-east tip of Sicily in the Strait of Messina. As a narrow passageway between the island of Sicily and the Italian peninsula, the area is well known for its strong winds and currents.

But it is the tidal activity in the strait that makes it a challenge for sailors. The tides in the Tyrrhenian Sea to the north of the channel are out of phase with the tides in the Ioanian Sea to the south. This results in turbulent water where they meet.

Odysseus and his crew faced a monstrous whirlpool, likely much larger than these (Credit: Massimo Lama/Alamy)

A submarine ridge in the Messina Straits also contributes to the turmoil, as currents pull cold water from the depths to the surface. Depending on the tidal activity, bore waves appear as well as whirlpools, also called vertical eddies. According to oceanographers, one of the larger ones develops off Capo del Faro, the place where Charybdis was historically marked.

While these hazards are navigable for most modern-day watercraft, they would have been riskier in Homer's time.

Cattle of the Sun



Odysseus and his crew eventually land on the island of Thrinacia, where the Sun god grazes his cattle. These animals are sacred but that does not stop the foolhardy crew hunting them when their supplies run short.

Academics have suggested that the island could be modern-day Sicily. There is evidence of both domesticated cattle and their wild relatives, aurochs (*Bos primigenius*)

at Neolithic sites there, according to historian Jeremy McInernery of the University of Pennsylvania, US.

Of these two species, the wild aurochs is the more striking. It stood 1.5m at the withers (the highest part of its back) and certainly had the "broad brow" and large "curving horns" described by Homer. Also, cattle were highly valued in ancient Greece.

"Evidence from many sites shows that in the Iron Age cattle were highly prized: for meat, for traction, and for by-products such as leather and probably tallow," says McInerney. "Before coinage reached Greece in the 6th Century, cattle were a primary measure of wealth. In common with other pastoral societies, the Greeks prized cattle wealth: hence the emphasis on cattle raiding in the epic poems."

The punishment for pinching the Sun's cattle is therefore suitably brutal. Zeus destroys the ships and sailors with a thunderbolt and only Odysseus survives to tell his epic tale. Evidently, it is one we are still learning from today.

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Body found inside towed van at Baltimore impound lot

yahoo.com

BALTIMORE (AP) — Authorities in Baltimore are investigating after a body was found in a van days after police had it towed to a city-owned impound lot.

Police say an employee at Baltimore City's Impound Lot discovered an unidentified man's body Tuesday morning inside the 2001 Chevy Astro van.

Det. Jeremy Silbert says there didn't appear to be any signs of trauma on the body.

Investigators say the owner of the van reported the vehicle missing Dec. 7, after someone the owner knew took it without permission.

Silbert says a patrol officer located the vehicle Saturday and had it delivered to the impound lot, where the body was later found.

An autopsy will be conducted to determine the cause and manner of death.

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Cops: Costumed SINCE 1997 man busted for Florida vending machine heists





http://www.thesmokinggun.com/file/chewbacca-theft

Chewbacca Theft

DECEMBER 20--A former employee of a Florida vending machine company dressed up in a Chewbacca costume and stole money from a pair of kiosks he



previously maintained, according to cops who arrested the "Star Wars" devotee for grand theft.

According to investigators, Darren Pickrem, 56, took a total of \$623 from a pair of vending machines operated by Florida Fresh Vending. The heist occurred late last Sunday at an office in Largo and was captured by a security camera.

"The defendant," a felony complaint states, "was observed on video entering the above

location in a 'Chewbacca' costume."

Pickrem was "terminated" by the vending company two months ago, cops report. And while he knew enough to wear a disguise, Pickrem inexplicably allowed cameras to get a shot of his face as he entered the building containing the vending machines.

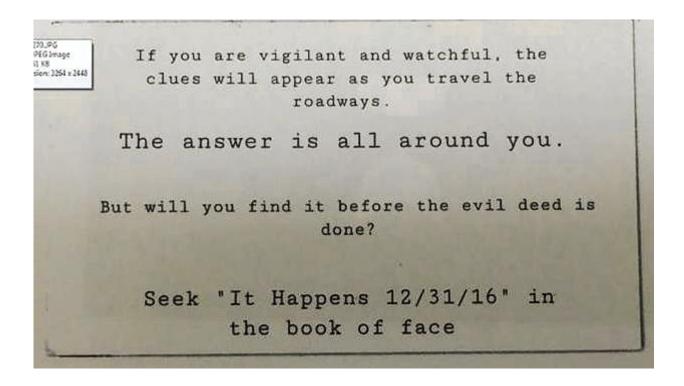
A witness identified Pickrem "with 100 percent certainty" since "she saw him on a daily basis for two years of his employment," according to the complaint.

Pickrem was booked into the county jail and later released on \$2000 bond. His rap sheet includes prior arrests for disorderly conduct and indecent exposure (both cases ended with Pickrem entering no contest pleas).

Pickrem, a Canadian native, once played for a junior hockey team affiliated with the Montreal Canadiens. His daughter Sydney, a 19-year-old swimmer, was a member of the Canadian Olympic team and competed at the 2016 Summer Olympics. (1 page)

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Cryptic, threatening cards and signs pop up in Aurora area



Threatening cards like this one have been found in the Aurora area over the past few days. (Aurora Police Department)

By Hannah Leone

Aurora Beacon-News

DECEMBER 22, 2016, 11:01 AM

he answer is all around you. But will you find it before the evil deed is done?"

"Probably hundreds" of small black-and-white cards bearing cryptic and threatening messages like that one, along with the image of a draining hourglass, were found Sunday on vehicles at several locations in the Aurora area, according to police and photos of the cards shared on social media.

On vehicles at the Fox Valley Mall in Aurora, a church in West Chicago and a church and theater in South Barrington, the cards bore additional messages saying that "something terrible is going to happen in Aurora 12/31/16. The wise will find the truth and act before it is too late," "If you are vigilant and watchful the clues will appear as you travel the roadways," and "seek it happens 12/31/16 in the book of face."

At the two churches, the cards were apparently placed while services were happening, said Aurora police spokesman Dan Ferrelli.

A sign with similar language also was found near Studio Drive and Barrington Road in South Barrington, Ferrelli said in an email.

Another similar sign was seen at 75th Street and Route 59 on the Aurora-Naperville border Thursday morning.

A Facebook page that mirrored the language on the cards and signs — but did not offer further specifics on what terrible thing would supposedly happen — has apparently since been taken down, Ferrelli said.

"We are working with the other agencies in the investigation," Ferrelli said. "At this time there are no suspects and in fact, we're not even certain what the meaning behind the messages are."

Police ask anyone with information about the cards and signs to call Aurora police investigators at 630-256-5500.

hleone@tribpub.com

Twitter @hannahmleone

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This article is related to: Aurora, South Barrington, Barrington



Deputies investigate goat attack in Fruitland Park

FRUITLAND PARK, Fla. (WOFL FOX 35) fox35orlando.com



Posted: Dec 19 2016 11:28PM EST

Updated: Dec 19 2016 11:28PM EST

- Army veteran Joshua Curtis of Fruitland Park showed our cameras where he says suspects broke into his pen of baby

goats and went on the attack.

"They didn't just shoot my goats, they went in there and starting stabbing them as well," Curtis said.

Two of his goats were shot dead and two others injured, his dog is also injured. He says the suspects, also threatened him with a gun.



P-FARM ANIMALS ATTACKED.tra 1482208049386.jpg

Army veteran Joshua Curtis of Fruitland Park showed our cameras where he says suspects broke into his pen of baby goats and went on the attack.

"It was senseless there was no reason for this to happen, and it's not the first time this is the fourth time this has happened" Curtis said.

But this time Lake County deputies were able to recover surveillance video from a neighbor's camera, showing two men running away after the incident.

"I am really hoping that helps actually I am very happy my neighbor had his

security cameras up and hopefully it brings them in," Curtis said.

Curtis is even putting up his own money, offering a \$1000 reward for information leading to the suspects.

"Anybody that can come up with the information that leads to the arrest and prosecution of these two individuals," Curtis said.

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Deputies: Man sexually assaults woman after shooting her in the head

news10.com



WFLA Published: December 20, 2016, 10:49 am Updated: December 20, 2016, 2:03 pm

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, Fla. (WFLA) - An Okeechobee

County man was charged with murder after detectives say he shot a woman who rejected his sexual advances and then sexually assaulted her.

The victim's sister called 911 on Dec. 7 after she went to her sister's home and found her dead and lying in a pool of blood.

Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to the home on Highway 70 and discovered the 25-year-old woman deceased on the floor of her kitchen. Deputies say it appeared as though her body had been dragged down the hallway and left in the kitchen.



shootsuspect

Detectives were called to the scene where they uncovered a horrible chain of events.

Investigators say the woman had been shot behind her ear with a .22 caliber rifle. They later found out that Christopher William Shows, 21, knew she and had gone to her home. She opened the door and let him inside where Shows made sexual advances toward her, but she rebuffed those advances.

Investigators say Shows then left her house and got a gun from his truck. He went back into her home and chased her through the house. Investigators say Shows shot her as she tried to run out the back door.

He then allegedly sexually assaulted her. Detectives say it was impossible to determine if she was still alive at the time.

Shows then stole the woman's phone, which was worth more than \$100. Detectives say Shows tried to cover up the crime by burning his clothes and disposing of her phone.

Shows was arrested on charges of First Degree Premeditated Murder, Armed Burglary of an Occupied Residence with a Battery, Desecration of a Body, Attempted Sexual Battery, and Grand Theft from a Residence.

NEWS10 ABC

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Half-eaten sandwich links man to recent burglaries, police say arkansasonline.com



Friday, December 23, 2016, 9:02 a.m.

Half-eaten sandwich links man to recent

By The Associated Press

This article was published December 22, 2016 at 12:58 p.m.

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich found at the scene leads Wyoming police to arrest a burglary suspect.

The Wyoming Tribune Eagle reports that Zachery Munoz has pleaded not guilty to three counts of burglary.

Cheyenne police say someone on three separate occasions in September stole power tools and equipment from a business. In the first case, police say they found a half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich at the scene. They dubbed the suspect the "PB&J burglar."

Police say subsequent DNA testing done at the Wyoming State Crime Lab linked 26-year-old Munoz to the sandwich.

He entered a plea earlier this month, and his trial is scheduled for February.

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How did the Romans celebrate 'Christmas'?

Wednesday 21st December 2016

historyextra.com



HiSTORY It is today associated with decorations, gift giving and indulgence. But how did the Romans celebrate during the festive season? Dr Carey Fleiner, a senior lecturer in classical and medieval history at the University of

Winchester, looks back at Saturnalia, the Roman mid-winter 'festival of misrule'.

This article was first published in 2013



Q: What was Saturnalia, and how was it celebrated?

A: It was the Romans' mid-winter knees up!

It was a topsy-turvy holiday of feasting, drinking, singing in the street naked, clapping hands, gambling in public and making noise.

A character in Macrobius's Saturnalia [an encyclopedic celebration of Roman culture written in the early fifth century] quotes from an unnamed priest of the god Saturn that, according to the god himself, during the

Saturnalia "all things that are serious are barred". So while it was a holy day, it was also very much a festive day as well.

The ordinarily rigid and conservative social restrictions of the Romans changed – for example, masters served their slaves during a feast and adults would serve children, and slaves were allowed to gamble.

And the aristocracy, who usually wore conservative clothes, dressed in brightly coloured fabrics such as red, purple and gold. This outfit was called the 'synthesis', which meant 'to be put together'. They would 'put together' whatever clothes they wanted.

People would also wear a cap of freedom – the pilleum – which was usually worn by slaves who had been awarded their freedom, to symbolise that they were 'free' during the Saturnalia.

People would feast in their homes, but the historian Livy notes that by 217 BC there would also be a huge public feast at the oldest temple in Rome, the Temple of Saturn. Macrobius confirms this, and says that the rowdy participants would spill out onto the street, with the participants shouting, "lo Saturnalia!" the way we might greet people with 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy New Year!'

A small statue of Saturn might be present at such feasts, as if Saturn himself were there. The statue of Saturn in the temple itself spent most of the year with its feet bound in woolen strips. On the feast day, these binds of wool wrapped around his feet were loosened – symbolising that the Romans were 'cutting loose' during the Saturnalia.

People were permitted to gamble in public and bob for corks in ice water. The author Aulus Gellius noted that, as a student, he and his friends would play trivia games. Chariot racing was also an

important component of the Saturnalia and the associated sun-god festivities around that time – by the late fourth century AD there might be up to 36 races a day.

We say that during Christmas today the whole world shuts down – the same thing happened during the Saturnalia. There were sometimes plots to overthrow the government, because people were distracted – the famous conspirator Cataline had planned to murder the Senate and set the city on fire during the holiday, but his plan was uncovered and stopped by Cicero in 63 BC.

Saturnalia was described by first-century AD poet Gaius Valerius Catullus as "the best of times". It was certainly the most popular holiday in the Roman calendar.



Q: Where does Saturnalia originate?

It was the result of the merging of three winter festivals over the centuries. These included the day of Saturn – the god of seeds and sowing – which was the Saturnalia itself. The dates for the Saturnalia shifted a bit over time, but it was originally held on 17 December.

Later, the 17th was given over to the Opalia, a feast day dedicated to Saturn's wife – who was also his sister. She was the goddess of abundance and the fruits of the earth.

Because they were associated with heaven (Saturn) and Earth (Opalia), their holidays ended up combined, according again to Macrobius. And the third was a feast day celebrating the shortest day, called the bruma by the Romans. The

Brumalia coincided with the solstice, on 21 or 22 December.

The three were merged, and became a seven-day jolly running from 17–23 December. But the emperor Augustus [who ruled from 27 BC–AD 14] shortened it to a three-day holiday, as it was causing chaos in terms of the working day.

Later, Caligula [ruled AD 37–41] extended it to a five-day holiday, and by the time of Macrobius [early fifth century] it had extended to almost two weeks.

As with so many Roman traditions, the origins of the Saturnalia are lost to the mists of time. The writer Columella notes in his book about agriculture [De Re Rustica, published in the early first century AD] that the Saturnalia came at the end of the agrarian year.

The festivities fell on the winter solstice, and helped to make up for the monotony of the lull between the end of the harvest and the beginning of the spring.

Q: Were gift-giving and decorations part of Saturnalia?

A: Saturnalia was more about a change in attitudes than presents. But a couple of gifts that were given were white candles, named cerei, and clay faces named sigillariae. The candles signified the increase of light after the solstice, while the sigillariae were little ornaments people exchanged.

These were sometimes hung in greenery as a form of decoration, and people would bring in holly and berries to honour Saturn.

Q: Was Saturnalia welcomed by everyone?

A: Not among the Romans!

Seneca [who died in AD 62] complained that the mob went out of control "in pleasantries", and Pliny the Younger wrote in one of his letters that he holed up in his study while the rest of the household celebrated.

As might be expected, the early Christian authorities objected to the festivities as well.

It wasn't until the late fourth century that the church fathers could agree on the date of Christ's birth – unlike the pagan Romans, Christians tended to give no importance to anyone's birthday. The big day in the Christian religious calendar was Easter.

Nevertheless, eventually the church settled on 25 December as the date of Christ's nativity. For the Christians, it was a holy day, not a holiday, and they wanted the period to be sombre and distinguished from the pagan Saturnalia traditions such as gambling, drinking, and of course, most of all, worshipping a pagan god!

But their attempts to ban Saturnalia were not successful, as it was so popular. As late as the eighth century, church authorities complained that even people in Rome were still celebrating the old pagan customs associated with the Saturnalia and other winter holidays.

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SHOCK CLAIM: Illuminati blasting us with 'happy drugs and viruses through chemtrails'

express.co.uk



SHOCK CLAIM: Illuminati blasting us with 'happy drugs and viruses through chemtrails'

SECRETIVE corrupt world leaders

are filling the skies with chemicals to keep us in check, and even sick, by blasting them out through so-called chemtrails, it has astonishingly been claimed.

By Jon AustinJon Austin

PUBLISHED:12:43, Wed, Dec 21, 2016 | UPDATED: 12:50, Fri, Dec 23, 2016

Conspiracy theorist Scott C Waring made the shocking allegation on his website ufosightingsdaily.com after sharing a video which allegedly shows a analysing the contrails of a passenger jet.

The chemtrails conspiracy theory is one of the most widely believed on Earth.

It claims that normal contrails seen coming from aircraft are actually being used to covertly spray chemicals into the sky in front of our eyes.

The theories over what is being sprayed vary from aerosols to stop global warming, to happy gs to keep populations in check, and even viral infections to make people sick and line the pockets of pharmaceutical companies.



YouTube

The "chemtrail" filmed over Slovakia which sparked the Scott C Waring rant.

Most chemtrail believers, whose number include Hollywood hardman Chuck Norris, claim the alleged Illuminati are behind the chemtrail scandal

The Illuminati is another widelybelieved conspiracy theory, which claims secretive corrupt business tycoons actually run Governments from behind the scenes, and they are

planning to bring about a New World Order and a global leadership.

In one of his most outlandish posts yet, Mr Waring alluded to believing both conspiracy theories, alongside his usual belief that aliens are secretly visiting Earth.

He was discussing video footage which allegedly showed a bright glowing orb UFO seen near the contrail of a passenger jet on December 16 in Slovakia.

An alleged UFO near the "chemtrail" filmed in Slovakia.

These substances could be causing diseases - zika, bird flu, cancer and many other problems of humanity, so the big medical companies can gain trillions every year from the medications.

Scott C Waring

He blogged: "This glowing UFO was seen this week over Europe and was scientifically analysing the substances that were in the trail behind the passenger jet.

"Chemtrails carry a lot of substances, and some believe that the world governments put top secret substances into the fuel of jets so that it will rain down over the public making them more mentally controllable so the government can make more progress in its political agenda.

"Also these substances could be causing diseases - zika, bird flu, cancer and many other problems of humanity, so the big medical companies can gain trillions every year from the medications that don't cure, but do help the problem if they are continuously taken.

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http://www.snopes.com/man-found-decapitated-castrated-behind-walmart-store/



Albuquerque police said a 42-year-old man was found mutilated on a parking lot median, but not on Walmart's property.

Bethania Palma

Dec 21, 2016



Claim: A man was found decapitated and castrated behind a Walmart store.



Origin:In late December, multiple news outlets began reporting on a horrific

case out of New Mexico, in which police found the mutilated body of a man in an Albuquerque parking lot:

Clifford Miller, 42, was discovered naked with both his head and genitals detached from his body. Two months earlier, he had come to New Mexico from Oklahoma in pursuit of a job, according to the Albuquerque Journal.

Investigators believe Miller was dumped behind the Walmart after having been slain somewhere else. They are unsure whether the mutilation took place before or after his death.

It is correct that at about midnight on 17 December 2016, Albuquerque police discovered the body of Miller with his head and genitalia cut off. Albuquerque police spokesman Fred Duran told us Miller had come to the city in search of work but that police so far know very little about Miller and have no

suspects in their investigation of his death. Duran told us investigators believe that the murder and mutilation of Miller happened at another location, saying "We're still trying to locate another scene."

Duran pointed out that while media reports are stating Miller's body was found "at" a Walmart, the crime scene was actually not located on Walmart property; Miller's body was found on a median in a parking lot that the business doesn't own. Duran added that while media reports have located a history of petty drug crimes for Miller, those cases stemmed from the 1990s and investigators do not believe they played into the motivation for his murder because they occurred so long ago.

A reporter from the *Albuquerque Journal* interviewed Miller's family members, who said he moved from Oklahoma to New Mexico in October 2016 seeking employment.

Originally published: 21 December 2016



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Man 'spots giant evil alien wearing cowboy hat' catching bus in Yeovil

By Susie Coen 12:06, 22 DEC 2016 Updated 12:22, 22 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Man 'spots giant evil 7ft alien wearing cowboy hat' catching the bus in Yeovil - and he's got 'proof'

The creature was apparently wearing a "weird" coat and had "silky hair" and no face when it was spotted in the middle of the quaint Somerset town



He spotted the so-called sinister creature at a bus stop in the middle of Yeovil (Photo: Google) The man offered this sketch as evidence of his alien claims (Photo: SWNS.com)

A man is convinced he saw a giant alien wearing a cowboy hat waiting at a bus stop in Yeovil – and has offered up a drawing as evidence.

He said the sinister-looking figure unnerved him so much he hasn't slept since and had to sketch an image to show the world.

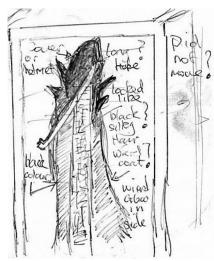
The 'alien' had no face and a long thin tube coming from the top of it.

The creature-spotter, who has asked not to be named, said it was standing outside Yeovil College in Somerset.

He said: "I was driving up the road as I normally do and I saw this dark looking figure by Yeovil College. It looked quite tall and had this big Stetson hat.

"I slowed down to have a closer look and thought it's not a man, it was about 7ft tall.

"It had this long thin tube coming from the top of it and spikes coming out of the side. The middle bit of it was like moleskin and hairy.



A man claims he has seen a 7ft tall ALIEN wearing a cowboy hat

"The thing wasn't moving at all and was in this box that had sparks coming out of it. It was like something out of science fiction."

The man drew an annotated picture of the alien, which he claims he saw on the afternoon of December 15, in the hope someone will tell him what it is.

In the drawing he notes that the beast, which was black in colour, wore a "weird" coat and had "silky hair".

The image also shows a long, rectangular body and a thin tube coming out of the hat, which looks like some kind of flute or long pipe.

The alien doesn't appear to have a face.

The man sent his drawing to his local paper and added that he wishes he had never stumbled upon it.

He said: "I just keep thinking I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. It's just mad.

"I'm struggling to sleep because of it and have been looking online seeing what it could be but I am at a loss."

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Man Accused of \$15K Victoria's Secret Underwear Thefts

Published at 4:32 PM EST on Jan 16, 2014 | Updated at 10:50 AM EST on Jan 17, 2014

nbcmiami.com

Daniel Espinosa, 18, was ordered held on \$3,500 bond Thursday

A Florida man accused of stealing a total of 850 pairs of underwear from Victoria's Secret remained behind bars following a Thursday court appearance.

Daniel Espinosa, 18, allegedly stole more than \$15,000 worth of property from Victoria's Secret on three occasions, Broward Circuit Judge John Hurley said. The thefts, which also involved a second suspect, took place at the Victoria's Secret store at the Sawgrass Mills mall, Sunrise Police said earlier this week as they released photos and videos from the case.



[NATL] Famous Mug Shots

"In November of 2013, [Espinosa] stole 300 pieces of Dream Angels women's underwear," Hurley said, reading from a report on the case. "And, allegedly on another date, stole 175 pairs of women's underwear, and that was worth over \$2,500. And allegedly on another date, stole 375 pairs of women's underwear. That was over \$5,000. And the three thefts totaled \$15,475."

The report said Espinosa confessed to committing the three thefts along with the codefendant, Hurley said. Espinosa, who faces a grand theft charge, is being held at the Broward County Main Jail,

online jail records showed.

The codefendant is a juvenile, and Hurley said that he stole \$76,000 worth of property. Hurley said that he set his bond at \$5,000.

Espinosa made his court appearance remotely via video. A public defender said Espinosa lives with his parents and is a recent high school graduate. Espinosa said he has no money in the bank and has lived in South Florida his whole life.

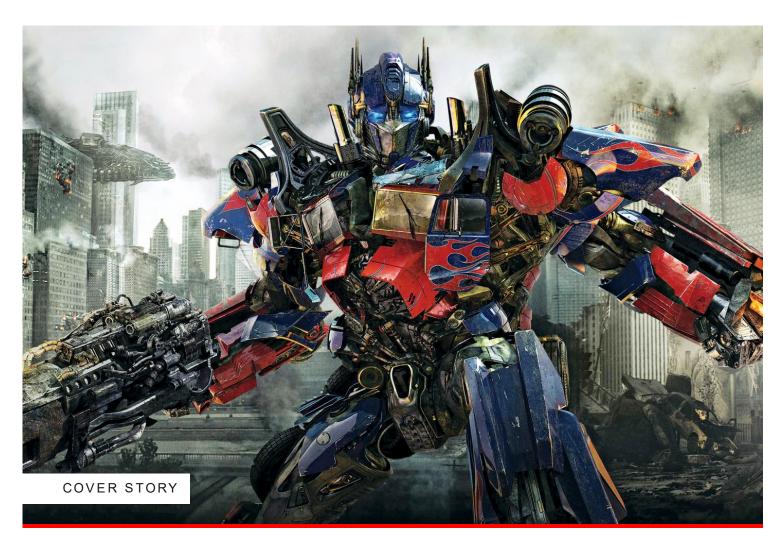
"Thank you," the judge told Espinosa as he concluded the hearing. "Don't come back to Victoria's Secret."

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M. Sign In Sign In Sign In Sign In WHO CHANGED HOW THE WORLD PLAYS

BY ABIGAIL JONES ON 12/21/16 AT 7:00 AM



The Nazis killed his parents, and three years in concentration camps almost killed his spirit, but when Henry Orenstein created some of the world's most popular toys, he proved that playing well is the best revenge.

NEWSWEEK

CULTURE

TOYS

HOLOCAUST

Henry Orenstein was standing outside his concentration camp barracks, shivering, when the amplified voice of his salvation cut through the frigid air: "All Jewish scientists, engineers, inventors, chemists and mathematicians must register immediately." It was January 1944, and his fellow prisoners were suffering and dying all around him—beaten during morning roll call for standing half a step out of line; hanged for trying to escape; shot in the head just because. Orenstein had just endured the latest perverse humiliation perpetrated by the SS guards, who had chased 400 wet, naked prisoners from the shower house out into the snow, then pummelled the frozen men as they climbed back inside, one by one, through a small window.

The voice blared out again: "All Jewish scientists, engineers, inventors, chemists and mathematicians must register immediately."

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What could this mean? Orenstein had heard rumors of evacuations and mass liquidations. What were the Nazis planning to do with these highly educated Jews? Experiment on them? Kill them first? He and his siblings (three brothers and a sister) were prisoners at Budzyn, a German labor camp near Krasnik, Poland, and he'd kept himself alive in the years leading up to the war by making insane, desperate bets on the kindness of strangers—sleeping in fields, hiding in empty oil drums and trusting his sharp instincts. Once, Henry had been caught by the Nazis and was being marched toward an execution pit when he shoved his watch and all his cash into the hands of a Ukrainian

police officer, then sprinted down a side street, wondering with every stride if that officer was going to shoot him in the back.

Related: The last Nazi hunter

After being interned by the Nazis, the Orensteins had lived in crowded barracks teeming with fleas and lice. They'd worked outside in numbing temperatures, wearing just thin pants and tops, and were nourished by only meager scraps of bread and soup that was little more than leaves and twigs boiled in water. Henry knew that their survival thus far had largely been a matter of luck, and that theirs couldn't last much longer, so when he heard those words a second time—"All Jewish scientists, engineers, inventors, chemists and mathematicians must register immediately"—he once again gambled with his life, with all their lives.

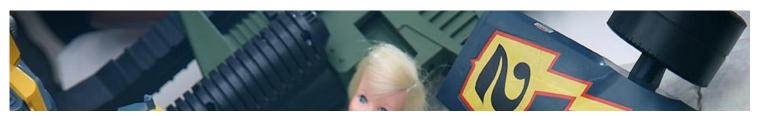
He walked straight to the office of the prisoner in charge of the camp administration and declared that he, his brothers and his sister were all scientists and mathematicians.

When his siblings found out what he had done, they were horrified. Fred *was* a doctor and Felix had studied medicine for a couple of years, but Sam was a lawyer, and Henry and Hanka hadn't even been to college. The Nazis would surely kill them all when they discovered that Henry had lied.

Henry didn't care—he figured the Germans would treat their "intellectuals" better than the other prisoners, and that even a few days of decent work conditions and food meant they'd be able to live just a little while longer. Even if his insane gamble only bought them one more day, it was worth it. He'd worry about tomorrow when it came, if it came.

He did not know then that this special group of Jewish prisoners would be charged with building a superweapon to save the Third Reich. Nor could he have imagined that the entire operation was a hoax. But he was right about one thing: Signing up for this so-called *Chemiker Kommando* saved his life. It was one of the many risks he took to survive the systematic genocide of 6 million Jews during World War II, and it would shape his extraordinary life over the next 60 years. The boy whose teen and young-adult years were ripped from him by the murderous Nazi rampage through Europe would show millions of children and adults how to play, how to squeeze more fun out of their lives.

'He Sings Himself to Sleep'





"Ideas don't come in little pieces. It's in; it's out. It's there, or it's not. It's like a sparkle," Orenstein says.

SHAMINDER DULAI

"I want to beat the shit out of these poker guys! That's what I want to do the most." Henry Orenstein now speaks English with a borscht-thick European accent that's just one notch above a whisper. He is still alive, still gambling and still winning most of his bets. Glancing out the window of his New York City pied-à-terre, which offers sweeping views of Central Park, he leans forward and rests his elbows on the large poker table in front of him. Wisps of gray hair and gray stubble frame his wrinkled face. He wears oversized tortoiseshell glasses, a blue and pink cowboy shirt with a cactus on the back (he designed it) and a blue visor that says *Poker Superstars* on the front (he created the show) and "Henry" on one side. The pleats in his navy slacks look like they've been pressed for him each morning for the past 30 years.

Orenstein is now 93, and his wife, Carolyn Sue (Susie), is 72, but he is too busy having fun to sink placidly into his dotage. Three days a week, from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., he hosts a high-stakes game of five-card stud in his Manhattan apartment with his poker buddies. "He calls 'em friends," Susie says, grinning. "They're sharks!"

ADVERTISEMENT

Ken Oakes, Orenstein's longtime driver, brings him a glass of water and a few cough drops. "I've been driving Henry for 24 years, since I retired from my regular job as a manager for Sears," he says. "I managed the toy department there. When the Transformers came out, we used to talk about it." That's because Orenstein was the man who saw the potential for Transformers in America. They made him a very rich man. Again.

"Transformers, more than meets the eye!" Orenstein croons.

"He sings all the time," Susie says. "He sings himself to sleep!"

"If the melody is pretty, I love it," he says, belting out the opening of Carmen, then a bit of the dulcet jingle he wrote for Louis Armstrong to sing in the commercial for one of the dolls that made Orenstein a titan of toys. "And her name was Suuuuuuzyyyyy Cute!" he warbles. Next, he does the chorus of "When the Saints Go Marching In" before launching into a song he wrote years ago:

Do the best you can, la la la Do your very best, la la la And worry no more About the rest

"He had every reason not to want to rebuild his life, not to want to have a family," says Malcolm Hoenlein, who runs the most powerful Jewish group in the U.S., the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "When you come out of seeing what he saw, what he lived through, to bring people into the world, to build a relationship, to do all that he was doing for others, it's remarkable...."



Orenstein remade himself many times; he was a tinkerer and sculptor, a jingles writer, and briefly even pretended to be a mathematician helping the Nazis build a secret weapon.

SHAMINDER DULAI

Of Poland's 3 million Jews, just over 300,000 survived the war. "Ninety to 97 percent of Polish Jews were killed," says Eliyana Adler, associate professor of history and Jewish Studies at Penn State. "Anyone who survived, they shouldn't have."

The story of how Henry Orenstein went from a small town in Poland, through five concentration camps, all the way to his 24th-floor apartment on one of Manhattan's most expensive strips of real estate is the stuff of fiction, and science fiction. He bluffed and cajoled to survive the Holocaust, and just a few years later, armed with unrelenting drive and rare creativity, he tinkered and hustled his way to the top of America's toy industry, helping to put dolls, race cars and one of the most successful action figures in history into the hands of generations of children. Then he transformed poker from a game played in dimly lit rooms to a billion-dollar business.

He chalks up much of his horrifying, astonishing, heartbreaking and exhilarating tale to luck, but it was luck born of guts and guile. He beat one of the most fearsome death machines man ever devised by seeing opportunities where others saw only ruin. He brought joy to millions by using that same gift—by daring to see what no one else saw, and by daring to transform himself, again and again.

'He'll Kill Us All!'



Orenstein, second from left, with some of his cousins in Poland in 1937, before the war. SHAMINDER DULAI

Henry Orenstein was born in 1923 in Hrubieszów, Poland . Half the town was Jewish, yet as a young boy he remembers looking out the window each morning and seeing signs like, "Jews to Palestine" and "Beat the Jews!" His father, Lejb, was a self-made businessman with a fabric store, a granary and a lucrative exporting business. His mother, Golda, took care of the family—Henry, his

older brothers, Fred, Felix and Sam, and their younger sister, Hanka—in a three-story house with a cook and a live-in maid. "It was a very happy and good family situation," Henry says, but, "we knew that our future was in danger."

As a boy, he lost himself in tales of the American Wild West and dreamt of becoming a scientist and curing diseases. In his freshman year of high school, he was the only straight-A student in his class, but at the end-of-year ceremony, the director announced that not a single freshman had earned the top academic prize. Henry was gutted. The school, he realized, would not give this award to a Jew.

Such anti-Semitism was rife all over Europe in the 1930s as Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany, and Henry remembers begging his father to move the family to America. "In desperation, I threw myself on the bed, face down, started crying hysterically, and said, 'Hitler will come here, and he'll kill us all!""

The German army rolled into Poland on September 1, 1939. A few days later, England and France declared war on Germany. A few weeks after that, Poland was divvied up between Germany and Russia, and the border between the two sides was just a few kilometers from Hrubieszów. The Orenstein men fled to the Russian side while Golda and Hanka stayed home. "We felt the Germans would not kill women, but they might kill men," Henry says.

A couple months after Lejb, Henry and his brothers left, 2,000 Jewish men from Hrubieszów and a neighboring town were rounded up and sent on a death march. Only a few hundred survived.

The Orenstein men spent the next two years in Soviet-occupied Poland, where Henry studied Russian, learned to play chess and graduated from high school at the top of his class. News occasionally trickled in from Golda and Hanka, who were still in their family home, although the Germans had seized the family businesses.

In June 1941, Germany turned on its eastern ally and invaded Russia, which meant the Orenstein men were no longer safe. They gave half their money to a Polish engineer who worked construction on both sides of the border. He promised to shepherd them back to Hrubieszów, but as they crouched in their hiding place and watched the sun rise, they knew he had abandoned them.

They bartered with strangers for food and shelter, giving away the rest of their money, Felix's herringbone tweed coat and even the straight razor they had been saving in case they needed to slit their wrists. At last they got lucky: A woman agreed to hide them in a haystack behind her house, bring them food and water, and arrange for their journey across the river. "She is one of the most brave and courageous and honorable people I've ever met in my life, and she is definitely responsible for me staying alive," says Orenstein, who made sure Yekaterina Lipinskaja was named at the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem that honors gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews.



NEWSWEEK

"In Poland, the penalty for hiding Jews was immediate death for the entire family," says Adler. "People had to be pure angels from heaven—or they had to be paid really well."

The family was finally reunited back in Hrubieszów on October 1, 1942, but just a couple of weeks later, the Gestapo gave all the Jews there two days to gather their belongings and assemble in the town square. The Orensteins gathered two weeks' worth of food and water and disappeared behind fake walls in the homes of neighbors.

On October 20, 3,000 Jews from Hrubieszów were sent to the Sobibor gas chambers.

While in hiding, Henry listened as search parties barged into homes and pounded on walls, dragging out any Jews they found. When he wasn't sitting in silence, terrified, he read a copy of Gone With the Wind that was missing the last 20 pages. "I always remembered how regretful I was that I would never know know what happened to Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler because I probably wouldn't survive the war."

After a week of this, the Orensteins heard a voice in the street shouting: "Amnesty! All Jews can come out of hiding. The action is finished." They knew it was a ruse—they'd heard of Jews turning themselves in only to be shot dead and tossed into mass graves—but they had no more food, no more water and nowhere to go. "There was no sign or possibility of help," Henry says. "So we gave up."

On October 28, 1942, Henry's family walked through the thick iron gate at the local Gestapo headquarters. Trucks pulled into the yard and Polish police officers started shoving Jews inside. The Orenstein children were separated from their parents; Henry saw his father helping his mother onto a truck. She looked beaten, desperate as she howled in Yiddish, "Niuniek, ndavor define di kinder!" "Fred, save the children!"

Henry and his siblings were sent to a local labor camp. Lejb and Golda were driven to the Jewish cemetery in Hrubieszów, where they were told to undress and lie down in rows at the edge of an execution pit. They were then shot in the head and shoved into the hole.

The Double Hoax



Orenstein, who evaded capture by the Nazis until 1942, survived five different concentration camps before being liberated while on a forced march as the Allies closed in on Berlin.

Skeletal and weak, Henry stood in front of three German civilians at his third concentration camp, this one near Krakow. They were interviewing the Jewish prisoners who'd registered as scientists, engineers and mathematicians, including Henry and his brothers; Hanka had been deemed too young for the special group and was shipped off to another camp.

Fred had already passed his interview. The civilians, who addressed each other as "Herr Professor," merely asked him how many legs a fly had.

Fred couldn't believe his luck. He knew the answer: six.

Next up were Felix and Sam, who were only asked about their "schooling" (they'd memorized whatever details Henry put down when he'd first registered the family). Then it was Henry's turn.

"Are you familiar with calculators?" one of the civilians said.

"Oh yes, I used them a lot at school," he replied, summoning up every shred of confidence he had left in him. The men seemed satisfied with all of them.

A few days later, guards escorted Henry, his brothers and a handful of other prisoners to a barracks. Inside were the "Herr professors." Henry, Sam and six other were taken to a table lined with old-fashioned cash registers. They were the "mathematicians." One of the professors handed them thick manila envelopes with hundreds of sheets of paper, each one covered with multiplication and division problems.

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256.1 x 788.2 =
52,354.05 ÷ 1.263 =
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"We had to punch in a number, times or divide it—whatever they wanted—then turn the handle by hand. A result appeared in the window. Write it down," Henry says. "That was the extent of our scientific endeavor."

Outside, he could see freezing prisoners struggling to work in the snow, while Fred and Felix sat nearby, at a table with the chemists, translating textbooks on insects from Polish to German. A prisoner who couldn't read or write German had been appointed the librarian of the group. The "engineers" and "inventors" were gathered around an automobile engine, turning it on and off. They'd been told they'd be inventing a gas that could immobilize cars, planes and tanks, but their materials had not yet arrived.

President Ronald W. Reagan White House Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

I am a survivor of five concentration camps. My parents, my brother, and my little sister were brutally murdered by SS Stormtroopers.

These SS Stormtroopers were not in the start

Orenstein's letter to President Ronald Reagan, published in The New York Times, April 22, 1985.

Henry marveled at the ludicrous scene—cadaverous prisoners, selected for their "expertise" and tasked with inventing secret weapons for the Nazis, were doing work that wouldn't tax a third-grader. Henry had been suspicious about the project since those interviews—why hadn't the

professors asked more questions, or harder ones? And why was their "research" so loosely supervised? It gradually became clear that the German civilians knew Henry and his brothers weren't scientists, weren't mathematicians, and they didn't care. "It was a cover-up on both sides!" he says. "German professors created this project to keep themselves from being drafted into the army. If they told the Gestapo that we were faking, we would have been killed, but they would have been drafted into the German army. To be sent to the Russian front was the worst thing that could happen. The winter and snow and all that; everyone was dying like flies. So they decided to fake the whole thing. Lucky for us."

(Many years later, Henry asked two German historians to verify that this sham operation had been real. They uncovered a letter between the head of the SS in Poland and Heinrich Himmler, the second-most-powerful man in Nazi Germany, and another between Himmler and a high-ranking SS commander in Berlin, both of which discussed the importance of the scientific research being done by these prisoners. The historians also found a page from the Ravensbrück register listing all eight mathematicians in the scientific group, including Henry, their names written in careful cursive and "Jude" scrawled next to each one.)

The Orenstein brothers were protected by this sham for nearly a year and a half, but as the Allied forces approached, Henry and Sam were among the 33,000 prisoners sent on a death march north, toward the Baltic Sea. (By that point, Fred and Felix had been deported to another camp.) Thousands died during this march from exhaustion, illness or gunshots, Henry says. "If you couldn't walk, they would shoot."

After marching for 10 days, Henry awoke one morning at the edge of a forest and heard someone shout: "The guards are gone!"

'My First Million-Dollar Doll'



In the mid-1950s, Orenstein came up with the idea to fill empty grocery store shelves with beautifully packaged dolls.

COURTESY OF HENRY ORENSTEIN

Dressed in a sharp suit, Henry Orenstein glided through his showroom as if he were a king on roller skates. For two weeks each year, buyers descended upon the Toy Center at 200 Fifth Ave. in New York City to shop for the latest novelties from the top toy companies, huddling around elaborate displays as finely dressed demonstrators revealed the magic of how this little oven opened or that doll's hair grew. "Henry was always in a hurry and very busy, but very nice to the people working for him," says Susie, who met Orenstein when she got a job as a showroom demonstrator at Topper

Toys, which he founded in the 1950s under its original name, Deluxe Reading. At its peak, Topper had 5,000 employees in its New Jersey factory. "Henry could step in and do the job of any one of them at any time. He was really something," Susie says. "Everybody used to talk about it all the time —if anything ever changed, he should be the president of the United States, because he was such a hotshot."

In 1958, Orenstein landed his first hit, Betty the Beautiful Bride, a 30-inch doll in an ornate white dress with 10 layers of ruffles. He came up with the idea when he saw a bride doll in a dazzling white dress displayed in a department store window. She cost \$29.95 (the equivalent of nearly \$250 today), so he told his designer to make him a taller, less expensive version that he could sell for \$9.99. "That's how I made my first million," he says. The next year, he launched Betty's bridesmaids and brought in \$2 million.

By then, 10 years had passed since Henry, Fred and Sam had stood on the deck of their Liberty ship, watching the Statue of Liberty slowly come into view. (Hanka had died on a death march in East Prussia and Felix had been murdered just days before liberation.) When Henry walked off the dock in New York City, he immediately bought copies of the New York *Daily News* and the New York *Daily Mirror*. He'd memorized 2,000 English words while waiting two years in Germany for his immigration papers to be approved. "I read every single word on every page [of those papers] from beginning to end, and there was not a single anti-Semitic reference anywhere," he says. "I breathed a sigh of relief."

His uncle rented him a room in a rough building on Manhattan's Upper West Side. His hallway was full of prostitutes, and like many immigrants, his resume began filling up with odd jobs as he hustled for work. He loaded heavy bales of cotton for 85 cents an hour; bought, ran and sold a grocery store; then convinced a manager at a canned food company to hire him for a position that required five years of experience, even though he had none. His first day on the job, he signed up more orders than the company's entire salesforce combined.



Orenstein had success competing with Mattel's wildly popular Barbie doll by offering Dawn, a less expensive alternative.

SHAMINDER DULAI

Orenstein had always been a tinkerer and sculptor—and he'd never been content to work for someone else—so when he came up with an idea in the mid-1950s to fill empty grocery store shelves with beautifully packaged dolls, his uncle loaned him startup capital (he's also the one who urged Susie to go out with Henry). Orenstein commissioned a series of dolls from a manufacturer and designed an attractive display box. "I took it for a test in Pennsylvania, because I didn't want anybody to see it [in New York]." A few days later, the store had received two dozen orders. "I said to myself, 'There it is!'" These dolls, which looked like the expensive fashion dolls sold in department stores but cost much less, came to be known as "Grocery Store Dolls."

Creative sparks came to him anywhere, anytime. A TWA commercial inspired him to create the best-selling toy of 1964, the toy gun Johnny 7 One Man Army (tagline: "It's seven guns in one!"). A dull social visit to a friend's house led to one of his biggest successes: a doll with blinking eyes. He'd thought of that one as he sat on the sofa, bored; he noticed a magnet on the glass table and, near it,

a small metal object. "I took that magnet under the glass and as I moved it, the metal object followed. I thought, That would be a great idea for a toy!"

The money and the patents started rolling in; today, he holds close to 100.

For more than two decades, Orenstein flooded American homes with some of the most memorable toys of the mid-20th century. His Johnny Lightning racing cars rivaled Hot Wheels. His Dawn dolls competed with Barbie. He created Suzy Homemaker appliances, Zoomer Boomer trucks and baby dolls with faces Orenstein designed. He sold "Walking Letters," which taught children how to spell, to *Sesame Street*, and hired Louis Armstrong to sing the ad jingle for his Suzy Cute doll. ("Armstrong was getting so drunk that at the end he couldn't walk," Orenstein says. "I remember, when we finished, I had him on one side, my assistant on the other side, and we actually dragged him along the floor, down the steps and out to the car.")



For a commercial for one of his dolls, Orenstein enlisted the efforts of Louis Armstrong and directed the jazz giant during a recording of the jingle for Topper Toys's very popular Suzy Cute

doll.

COURTESY OF HENRY ORENSTEIN

Orenstein's outsider status and his seemingly effortless success rankled the more established players in the toy world. "Mattel was determined to destroy Topper," Susie says. "Former employees of Mattel would tell us how they'd have days of meetings on how to destroy Henry Orenstein."

A Huge Transformation

Henry turned the small toy car over in his hands, gauging the weight of it. He'd spotted the thing in a showroom at the New York Toy Fair, on a shelf off to the side, so far away from the main display he assumed it had been discarded. He gently flipped the front doors open and nudged the backseat, and poof: The car transformed into a plane. He thought, This is the best idea I've seen in many years!

"He went into a trance," recalls Susie, who was with him that day. "I didn't know what he was talking about!"

It was the early 1980s; Topper had filed for bankruptcy in 1972 after the bank called back their loan (Susie calls it "the blemish on his career"), but Henry had remained in the business, pitching ideas to large toy companies. He always had an eye for the overlooked, so when he saw that car turn into a plane, he got the feeling he'd had many times before. "Ideas don't come in little pieces. It's in; it's out. It's there, or it's not. It's like a sparkle," he says. "I was just an inventor. You needed a big company to do what I thought should be done: making real transformations from complex things to other complex things."

That tiny car was manufactured by a Japanese toy company named Takara. "I knew the president," Orenstein says. "I went to him and said, 'I think this could be a great thing, building a bridge between Japanese ingenuity and American marketing." He then went to Hasbro, the toy giant behind G.I. Joe and My Little Pony, and became a matchmaker, pitching his vision for a line of transforming toys that went far beyond cars turning into planes. "Very definitely, Henry was the bridge in this one transaction with Takara," says Alan Hassenfeld, former chairman and CEO of Hasbro. "Henry basically had a sense that Transformers was going to be something that would be transformational for the toy industry.... To be able to take a car and, with a little bit of dexterity, change it into another toy, that was something magical."

"It was Henry who really saw the magic, the potential, that was inside all these different brands that Takara was presenting," says Tom Warner, Senior Vice President of the Transformers franchise.

"There's a lot of toys out there, but it takes a very special individual to look at something, identify it, and say it will be a big hit in the U.S."

"Everyone in the toy business is looking for the next big thing," says toy historian Tim Walsh, but coming up with a truly successful toy "takes an outsider.... The things that are huge hits, people never see coming." Silly Putty was originally a synthetic rubber created by accident during World War II. The Slinky was a torsion spring created by a mechanical engineer to immobilize sensitive equipment at sea. Play-Doh was supposed to be a commercial wallpaper cleaner. And Transformers were just a small car cast aside at a toy fair.

Henry didn't style Bumblebee or create Optimus Prime's backstory—teams of writers, designers and artists at Hasbro developed the ubiquitous Transformers we know today—but he was there first, the one who saw the promise. "Henry was absolutely the catalyst that made this happen," Hassenfeld says.

Hasbro, working with Takara, created the Transformers in 1984, and since then those multifaceted robots have become one of the most successful action figure brands in history, touching all outposts of popular culture, from comic books and a popular theme song to numerous TV series, imitators (GoBots, anyone?) and a blockbuster movie franchise. In 2007, the first *Transformers* movie made over \$700 million worldwide. Three more films followed. Hasbro says the Transformers franchise has brought in more than \$10 billion since 2004.

Show Me His Cards



By figuring out how to reveal hole cards, Orenstein transformed poker into a billion-dollar industry that spawned TV shows, tournaments and lucrative online sites.

SHAMINDER DULAI

Mori Eskandani first met the toy man in 1987, during a game of Seven Card Stud at the Bicycle Hotel & Casino, a 100,000-square-foot ocean of poker tables in Los Angeles. "We just had fun," says Eskandani, a veteran poker player whose company, <u>Poker Productions</u>, produces the *World Series of Poker*. "Henry was entertaining, not just because of the skill level of his game but also because of how fun the atmosphere was. Nobody was mad. Nobody was cussing and fussing."

Dressed in his signature blue suede Western shirt and string tie, Orenstein played until he ran out of money. "He asked me if I would cash him a check, and I did. If you're a professional poker player, you always know by the way people conduct themselves if they're good for it. It was very, very obvious he was a wealthy man. He wasn't worried about putting his money in the pot; he was just having fun." A week later, Orenstein mailed Eskandani a check, along with a box the size of a refrigerator for his two kids, filled with every Transformer toy on the market.

Henry had been an avid chess player since he'd learned the game in Russian-occupied Poland as a teen; he only took up poker in his 60s. He was a very wealthy man by then, so he could afford to pay for his "lessons" in some of the best poker rooms in the country, playing high-stakes games in California; Atlantic City, New Jersey; and Las Vegas. This was in the early 1990s, when poker was still a slightly shady game shrouded in cigar smoke; once a year, ESPN aired a one-hour special on the World Series of Poker, but other than that, it was where it had always been, in the shadows, or in the basement rec room. The poker world had no idea how lucky it was that day when Henry Orenstein, a man who found inspiration in the most mundane things—a magnet on a glass table, a tiny toy car—sat down to watch the World Series and quickly became bored out of his mind. Where's the drama in watching people play poker if you can't see their cards?

He spent six months creating the solution: a poker table equipped with hole-card cameras. (Hole cards, also known as down cards, are kept face down; only the player can see them.) By placing cameras under glass panels, Henry could bring TV viewers in on the secrets and strategies and ballsy bluffs of the game.

He patented his table in 1995, and the world of poker stood up and said, as one: pass.

The best players balked at revealing their secrets on TV. "It would take someone like Henry to tell them they're wrong," Eskandani says. "He said, 'Don't worry—you put a TV camera in front of them, and they'll do anything you want."

But TV execs weren't interested, so Orenstein tabled his table, and devoted his time to becoming one of the top poker players in the U.S. He won the 1996 World Series of Poker Seven Card Stud tournament. In 2005, he beat Chip Reese in the first round of the National Heads-Up Poker Championship—a feat that's like beating Michael Jordan in a game of horse.

In 2002, Orenstein was ready for another transformation, another big gamble. He cold-called Jon Miller, head of NBC Sports.

"On a Tuesday morning, I came back to my office after my staff meeting and my assistant says, 'You have a 10:30 a.m. call with a man named Henry Orenstein.' I said to her, 'Who is Henry Orenstein?' She says, 'Just do me a favor, please take the phone call."

Miller's phone rang at 10:30 a.m. sharp.

"Do you have the package I sent you?" Orenstein asked.

Miller scanned his desk. No package. "Is there a package?" he asked his assistant. She walked into his office holding a FedEx in hand. "I was supposed to give this to you when you got on the phone,"

she said, apologizing.

Inside, Miller found two bank statements. "I won't tell you the numbers, but both of them had significantly large balances," he says. "Eight- or nine-figure balances. It was a *lot* of money."



In 2014, Orenstein, still sharp, came in ninth out of 130 people in a poker tournament in Las Vegas.

SHAMINDER DULAI

Orenstein explained that he needed Miller to understand that he was "a serious man...with a serious idea." Henry then told him about his table with hole-card cameras, and his vision for a high-stakes tournament with a huge buy-in and the best poker players in the country, shown live on TV. Miller was captivated. NBC had walked away from NFL and NBA programming, and he was looking for new, profitable ways to fill air time. He also had two teenage sons who spent weekends playing poker. "I've learned a lot from my kids, and I think if you don't, you're kind of a fool," he says. "I knew this was something we had to pay attention to."

Together, they launched *Poker Superstars* and *High Stakes Poker*. Soon after, the sport exploded on TV and online. "None of that happens...without the hole-card camera," Miller says. "This one man is the reason poker is as big as it is—that ESPN pays millions of dollars for the *World Series of Poker*, that Pokerstars and Full Tilt and Betfair and all these other [online poker] companies are out there. The reason poker is a multibillion-dollar business is because of this one man!"

"We called that table the Holy Grail," Eskandani says. "Henry had to improve something all the time. That's how his mind works. I used to say, 'They'd give him the Statue of Liberty and he'd make it a little taller or shave the handle."

Johnny Lightning

Orenstein is getting antsy. He has delayed his weekly poker game by a few hours to make time for this interview, but now he wants to know where his "sharks" are, because he is ready to play some poker. Behind him hangs a framed photograph of 1971 Indianapolis 500 winner Al Unser taking a victory lap in the "Johnny Lightning" car (Orenstein sat inside; he sponsored it). Next to it, a photo of Orenstein directing Louis Armstrong in that 1964 Suzy Cute commercial.



Orenstein, left, directs jazz giant Louis Armstrong for his recording of the Suzy Cute doll jingle.

SHAMINDER DULAI

These days, Susie says, their lives are all about poker. She has accompanied Henry to tournaments in Las Vegas, California and Atlantic City, and arranged three-month-long stays at the Commerce Casino near Los Angeles, where he'll play 12 hours a day, with only a break for lunch. "He wanted to move to California to be near this casino. I mean, this is the armpit of the world, *Commerce*!" she says. "In 2014, he was still sharp and was in a poker tournament in Las Vegas and he came in ninth out of 130 people. He was definitely the oldest guy. Everybody was rooting for him."

Finally, there's a knock on the door and five of Henry's poker buddies walk in. Most are about half his age, and they gather around the table shaking hands and catching up. "Do you know how many people in the poker world this man helps?" says Stuart Kempner, who everybody calls Stuey. He's dressed in all black and his skin glows with a deep orange hue. "This guy got cancer and Henry was paying his rent and giving him money. He helps them all. Paid bills. Sent kids to college." For nearly half a century, Orenstein has also supported Holocaust survivors and low-income families, helping them buy medical devices, furniture, clothes, food, even tombstones. "He took cases where there was nowhere else to turn," says Jackie Ebron, who oversees his charitable giving at the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty. "And the people never knew who he was. He didn't want you to know who it was."

For a few seconds, all we hear is the soft, rhythmic chattering of cards being shuffled. Then Stuey deals a hand. The players assess their cards, and the room goes quiet except for their bids and the gentle thud of poker chips landing on the padded green felt table.

Orenstein doesn't see too well anymore, so the guys call out the up cards on the table. "Ace, queen of spades, Henry," someone says. Orenstein picks up his down cards and slowly, with almost no movement, checks his hand.

Susie puts on her coat and picks up her purse, explaining that she usually steps out during her husband's poker games. "When I met Henry, he had all these regrets," she says, standing near the door. "He wanted to do something important, like research—something that would mean something, or cure something. He thought making toys was not that important. Little did he know. ..."

Orenstein peers across the table. "I've got three [of] diamonds?" he says, referring to his upcard.

"Yeah," someone says.

"Don't raise me because I won't be able to call if you raise me," another player says.

"I raise you!" Henry says, barely cracking a smile.

Everyone laughs, and a couple of calls later, Henry takes the hand, tossing his cards into the pile before anyone can tell if he was bluffing. Once again, he bet big, and won big. Call it luck, and he'd probably agree with you.

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Naughty spaniels feeling 'ruff' after getting drunk on Christmas Advocaat

By Jeremy Armstrong 15:54, 20 DEC 2016 Updated 15:54, 20 DEC 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Naughty spaniels Oscar and Martha feeling 'ruff' after getting drunk on Christmas Advocaat

The tipsy pair needed emergency treatment when owners Fiona and Anthony Robson found them 'staggering' around the kitchen



Oscar and Martha had to have emergency treatment (Photo: Handout) Oscar and Martha with Brecon, who is thought to have knocked the bottle off the shelf (Photo: Handout) Oscar and Martha have a taste for the Christmas tipple (Photo: Handout)

Naughty Spaniels Oscar and Martha were in the dog house - after they got drunk on the Christmas Advocaat.

The tipsy pair needed emergency treatment when owners Fiona and Anthony Robson found them 'staggering' around the kitchen as they came home from work.

Their third pet, Brecon, a boisterous Cocker Spaniel, is thought to have knocked the bottle off a bench at the couple's home in Sunniside, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

But he was stone cold sober after watching Oscar and Martha lick it off the floor.

Fiona, who runs a dog grooming business, had bought the Advocaat to make Snowball cocktails over Christmas.



She said: "Brecon, who was clearly the ringleader as he jumps on benches, was absolutely fine.

"Oscar was standing in the corner of the utility room looking sheepish and drowsy.

"Martha was staggering and swaying and fell over when I tried to grab her collar.

"I was panic-stricken as we are so careful with our pets and could never have imagined anything like this happening.

"I can see the funny side of it – but I won't be keeping bottles on the top of unit anymore."

The two Cocker Spaniels were treated at Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital in Leadgate, near Consett, County Durham.

Vet Emma Hindson had to induce vomiting, before feeding them activated charcoal to absorb the remaining alcohol.



It is their second case of dogs getting drunk over the festive season after two Labradors smashed red wine bottles and licked the contents from the floor.

Dr Hindson said: "Alcohol affects pets in the same way it does humans, so Oscar and Martha were quite tiddly when they arrived.

"Brecon was absolutely fine, but the other two were a bit wobbly. After inducing vomiting and giving them charcoal, we kept them in for observation as the main concern is dehydration,

"This was an unfortunate accident and their owner did the right thing by bringing them in immediately for treatment. Her responsible action meant everything turned out fine and they could go home."

She urged owners to keep alcohol locked away, mop up spillages, and call vets immediately if pets drink any booze.

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By Elizabeth Shim | Updated Dec. 21, 2016 at 2:41 PM



A North Korean border guard stands at the joint security area (JSA) of Panmunjom in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) on the border near Paju, South Korea, on Feb. 18, 2016. Photo by Keizo Mori/UPI

SEOUL, Dec. 21 (UPI) -- An outbreak of diarrhea that soldiers are cynically describing as a "gift from Kim Jong Un" is affecting a North Korean unit of border guards, sources in the country say.

Multiple soldiers have fallen ill after consuming new food that was expressly

supplied for border guards by the general rear services bureau of North Korea's ministry of people's armed forces, Radio Free Asia reported Wednesday.

A source in North Hamgyong Province told RFA, "Under the direction of Kim Jong Un, North Korea's people's armed forces increased the supply of materials to improve the diet of border guard soldiers."

"However, diarrhea has spread among soldiers who consumed the new food supply and is causing an uproar," the source added.

Kim allegedly made the decision to supply better food after receiving reports from officers who had toured floodstricken areas of the country.

The North Korean leader has yet to visit the flood-hit regions.

The officers saw border guards were not receiving a satisfactory diet in the wards, and Kim ordered the armed forces to "prepare meals for the border guard soldiers so that they would not envy a Chinese person" with better dietary options.

The new food began to be supplied Dec. 1 when winter training began for the military, the source said.

But some of the supplies were defective and were mixed in with "iron powder" and "threads," a source in Yanggang Province told RFA.

Sand was found in delivered soup stock, and a provision of Japanese sandfish had a strange smell, according to the source.

The sandfish caused diarrhea among soldiers and the outbreak has given rise to new levels of cynicism regarding Kim's policies, the source said.

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Alaska Dispatch News

Friday, December 23, 2016

Author:Adrian Higgins, The Washington Post

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is not exactly at the North Pole, but it's nearer to it than just about anywhere else, and well inside the Arctic Circle on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard.

This beguiling structure juts out from a mountain near the town of Longyearbyen, which is reputed to be the northernmost permanent settlement on Earth and a place where residents must go about their business with rifles slung over their backs, on account of the polar bears. The sun falls below the horizon on Nov. 14 and isn't seen again until March 8.

It is precisely this remoteness and coldness that led scientist Cary Fowler and his colleagues at the Global Crop Diversity Trust, now known as the Crop Trust, to persuade the Norwegian government to locate the vault there. Almost nine years after it was built, the seed vault has taken on a mythic quality around the world, perhaps because its entrance – stark, geometric, bejeweled by a light sculpture by Norwegian artist Dyveke Sanne – hints at something not just hidden but forbidden. Bauhaus meets Valhalla.



The vault's enigmatic entrance, photographed from the air. (Mari Tefre – Prospecta Press)

The vault's enigmatic entrance, photographed from the air. (Mari Tefre – Prospecta Press)

Fowler, with principal photographer Mari Tefre, has just written a book on the vault that lifts the veil on the place – it's not open to the public even though it quickly became the second most recognized structure in Norway. The book is called "Seeds on Ice," and if you're still looking for a gift for the gardener or gourmet in your life, this would work handsomely.

Svalbard's beguiling paradox of fame and mystery inevitably has spawned various wacky conspiracy theories, including the idea that the vault is a top-secret NATO facility housing a global eugenics project. Fowler hopes the book will dispel a more mainstream misapprehension, that this is a doomsday vault, a time capsule to unlock after a nuclear Armageddon.

[Change in the Arctic this year was unlike any ever seen, scientists say]

The vault today houses more than half a billion seeds representing 881,473 unique varieties of plants used to feed people. The seeds come from the existing seed banks in 233 countries, and they are insurance against the loss of an irreplaceable crop to something as unexciting as a budget crisis in a poor country (or a rich one) to, yes, a cataclysmic nuclear war.

Each seed has its own genetic makeup, and the value of these stocks is in their DNA. If a new disease or pest were to wipe out a strain of wheat, for example, it's probable that the germ plasm at Svalbard could be used to breed in resistance. Climate change poses another tangible threat, as extreme weather events, rising waters and shifts in temperatures require the development of new varieties to handle the challenges.

Cary Fowler in the main seed vault. Its natural year-round temperature is minus-5 degrees Celsius (23 F), but the air is further cooled to the optimum storage temperature of minus-18 degrees Celsius (zero F). (Jim Richardson – Prospecta Press)

In part, the Svalbard vault is best understood by what it is not: It is not a vast subterranean laboratory staffed with the world's boffins in white coats, a la CERN or a James Bond movie. It is a hole in a mountain, a tunnel

that extends a few hundred feet and terminates in three chambers, each 90 feet long, 30 feet wide and 16 feet high. Only one is in use at the moment.

It is simple, relatively cheap to run, and designed to withstand physical calamity and human interference. It is meant to last a thousand years or more.

It is not permanently staffed, though it is constantly monitored and the seeds are housed behind at least five locked doors. You couldn't just show up and loiter with intent. You would be noticed by the local police, or the controllers in the distant airport tower or the polar bears.

Nor is it a time capsule. The seeds are very much alive and available for use today, if needed.

Unfortunately, that has come to pass with the tragedy that has befallen Aleppo. The Syrian city held the seed bank of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and contained vital stocks of such staples as wheat, barley, chickpeas and fava beans.

The staff there sent seeds to Svalbard just months before the engulfing civil war. Last year, Svalbard returned many of the seeds to new ICARDA facilities established in Morocco and Lebanon, where scientists and farmers are now growing them to regenerate seed.

The threats to our food supply are often far less stark but no less real. Fowler says agriculture faces "its most severe set of challenges since the Neolithic period." Besides climate change, this includes the need to grow more food for a growing population using fewer resources. One contemporary approach to this is the development of genetically modified organisms by multinational biotech companies. The vault doesn't contain GMOs, though Fowler's stance on this is not strictly in opposition to transgenic breeding. His interest, instead, is in conserving all the natural genetic diversity embodied in these seeds as insurance for our food supply in the centuries to come.

Located on the island of Spitsbergen, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault safeguards the agricultural plant collections of more than 230 countries. (Mari Tefre – Prospecta Press)

In the early '90s, Fowler, a native Tennessean, was recruited by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization to oversee a review of the world's crop diversity and found many national seed collections in dire states of storage and care. He has since left the directorship of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, though he remains an adviser to the trust and is chair of the seed vault's International Advisory Council.

He says the Svalbard vault could bring a more rational system of seed conservation to seed banks around the world by relieving some of the pressure on national collections and the resources needed to maintain them.

Fowler has been immersed in this field for decades, but Svalbard made him realize, he said, that many of the world's agricultural crops are not familiar even to experts. What, you might ask, is sesbania, or Chihuahuan snout-bean or voa vanga?

The point is that tastes and crops change – how many gardeners in the United States were growing bok choy or arugula 50 years ago? "People look at the seed vault and see it as a conservation initiative," he told me. "But those of us in the field have multiple motivations. The reason for wanting to conserve it isn't to make us feel good but have it be of use in the future."

Like the crystalline, fiber-optic sculpture at its portal, the vault is a beacon of optimism and comity in a world that may seem cold and dark. It is a gift to the entire human family for generations to come. Santa, an Arctic neighbor, no doubt would approve.

COMMENTS

ak5

2 days ago

Interesting how the seeds are shared now. Good article.

Syringa Lewis

1 day ago

Known about this facility for quite some time now. Very cool; check it out.

http://blog.seedsavers.org/blog/svalbard-with-cary-fowler

Les Brown

2 days ago

I hope it is well defended.

In time of sufficient stress those stored seeds will seem like a great soup ingredient!

Kc Jackson

2 days ago

Wonder if this island is having melting problems?

Syringa Lewis

1 day ago

Icebergs mellt; islands, not so much.

Jeffrey

1 day ago

First day briefings must be intense:

"no water...no soil...no sunlight, unless you want this place to be ground zero for the sequel to avatar...no food...no drinks."

Keith larson

2 days ago

So polar bears are not on the decline,,, they are moving

Jonathan Dewar

2 days ago

They aren't moving. That island has always been in their natural range, which includes more than just Alaska (in fact, the vast majority of it isn't Alaska).

Keith larson

2 days ago

Well said,, thank you.

Sunny Jim

2 days ago

Lol... secret nato eugenics project confirmed.

Keith larson

1 day ago

Plants need bees �� to pollinate the plants, so how will they save the bees ??? Better put them on the endangered species list ... next to polar bears! ��

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Ontario university creates world's 'smallest snowman' out of tiny silica spheres

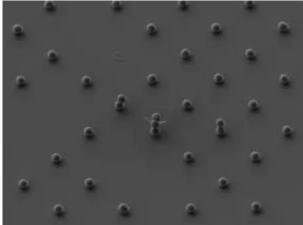
| December 23, 2016 | Last Updated: Dec 24 3:24 PM ET

nationalpost.com



Days before Christmas, a research scientist at an Ontario university has created a microscopic figure he's calling the world's "smallest snowman."

Todd Simpson, from Western University's Nanofabrication Facility, says the figure was made from three incredibly tiny silica spheres stacked on top of each other, with arms and a nose made of platinum.



Western University handout/ The Canadian Press An incredibly tiny "snowman" is seen along with other tiny silica spheres in this handout photo from Western University's Nanofabrication Facility taken with an electron microscope.

The facility published an image of the tiny smiling figure online and Simpson says he's amazed at the buzz it has generated.

"It's just a compelling little image, especially for the time of year," he said.

Simpson said he made the figure just to promote the kind of work the lab does.

"It's not easy to find something that's easy for people to comprehend — most of what we do is pretty complicated and probably kind of boring to most," he said. "It's not something we set out to make, it was something that I found on a sample made for another purpose but it only took a few minutes to give him arms and a face and a

nose."

The minuscule figure actually traces its beginnings to December 2005, when Simpson said he was working on a process to fabricate silica spheres and found some instances of three of them stacked together, resembling a snowman.

At that time, he used an annotation feature of a microscope software program to draw a face and arms on an image of one triple stack and placed the picture on the lab's Christmas card.



This year, Simpson took things further and used a Focused Ion Beam instrument to create physical platinum arms and facial features for the triple stack of silica spheres.

"I've been meaning to do this for a while," he said.
"It's obviously something you want to do just before
Christmas. I had the sample sitting there, waiting for
a chance ... I had some spare time so I just popped
it in and made it up."

The figure is less than 3 microns tall — for comparison, a human hair is about 50 microns in diameter — and can only be seen with an electron

Western University handout/ The Canadian Press Todd Simpson, from Western University's Nanofabrication Facility, says the figure he's calling the world's "smallest snowman" was made from three incredibly tiny silica spheres stacked on top of each other, with arms and a nose made of platinum.

microscope, Simpson said.

The miniature figure, which sits on a silicon wafer, has now been placed in its carrier box and stored in the lab, Simpson said.

"If we ever want to bring it out we can find it," he said.

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Oskorei and Haug-folk - The Dangers of a Norwegian Christmas - Haunted Ohio Books

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This is the official website of the 7-volume Haunted Ohio series and the Ghosts of the Past series by Ohio author Chris Woodyard

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Oskorei and Haug-folk - The Dangers

of a Norwegian Christmas



Christmas, that hap, happiest time of the year, has a somewhat malign reputation in folklore. Over at Mrs Daffodil Digresses, I wrote of the sinister talents of "The Christmas Eve Child." Persons born on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day may be doomed to sorrow, have the Evil Eye, or become vampires. Such birthdays are a real curse, especially since the Christmas birthday child rarely gets two sets of presents.

Christmas is also a time when evil might gain ascendency, creating vampires and allowing spirits to walk abroad. "The air was filled with

phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went," Dickens wrote in *A Christmas Carol*. In Norway too, Christmas was fraught with danger. Here are two stories of the perils that can face those who meet the *Oskorei* and the *Haug*-folk at Christmas.

The Oskorei Fear the Cross.

There is in the inlands of Norway a distinct cycle of legends about "the terrible host," *Oskoreien* or *Jolereien*. The latter name indicates that the host is particularly dangerous around Christmas time. In the coastal district of Norway the host appears like a group of restless souls of the dead (see Introduction, pp. xxxii). Legends about such spirits of the air exist in various parts of the world. Theories have been proposed connecting "the terrible host" with the followers of Indo-European gods, such as Rudra in India and Odin in Scandinavia. The legend given here was collected by the Reverend M.. Landstad in Telemark in the 1840's and printed in Norsk Folkeminnelag, XIII (1926), 10-11.

A man from Natadal had been over in Hjartdal, the neighboring parish, and it so happened that it was late in the afternoon when he started for home. By the time he had come to a valley farther up the sun had set, and when he had come up on the mountain at Valler, on his way toward a valley farther in, it was the quietest sort of the summer night, and not a single bird was chirping any longer. As he walked there, he heard a terrible commotion. He turned around to see what it was and knew it was the *oskorei*

(evil spirits) who were rushing along. Bridles jingled and weapons clinked, and he heard them quarrelling among themselves. The *oskorei* wanted food, and the leader—Guro Rysserova—said they would have teo wait until they came to Natadal. There they would eat their fill, for there they would find "Friday-baked bread and Sunday-raked hay!"

When the Natadal man heard this, he did not feel any too comfortable for they were talking about his own *stabbur* (store-house) and barn. But the *oskorei* were so close behind him that there was no chance of running away. He ran off the road a little way and, flinging himself down in the grass on his back, he stretched his arms straight out on each side so that he was lying there in the form of a cross.

When the host of *oskorei* came up, they stopped, and Guro shrieked, "Uff! Look at that cross!"

Then they dared not ride past him, but went a long way around. When the man understood this, he jumped up and took to his heels as fast as he could. He had a slight head start and hurried home. He managed to make the sign of a cross above the wicket in the road down to the farm and on all the doors. In this way he fooled the *oskorei*, which dared not ride in to the farm.

In the old days people believed that on Friday, which was a day of fast, no work must be done in which a swinging or rolling movement was involved. Thus they could not bake oatcakes. And it was a sin to work on Sunday. Then the evil powers had the right to take the fruits of this labor. But they were always powerless against the sign of the cross.

On Dalen farm in Kvitseid, the *oskorei* came several times. Once they unsaddled their spirit horses there and threw the saddles on the roof. Then misfortune followed: there were seven murders on the farm, and there was never peace to be had at night. There was always a disturbance and a commotion, and the front door would never stay shut no matter how they locked it. Once, at Christmas time, the people from Dalen were invited to a feast at Hvestad. There was no one home and the doors were locked, but the food stood on the table as was the custom at Christmas. When the people came home a few days later, they could see that the *oskorei* had been there. They had drunk up the Christmas ale and eaten heartily of the Christmas fare. But worst of all, a dead man was hanging from the pothook over the hearth. By his clothes they could tell he was from Numedal, a valley to the east, and he had silver buttons on his vest. The *oskorei* had probably taken him along over in Numedal and had ridden so hard that it had killed him.

Folktales of Norway, Reidar Christiansen, pp. 75-6

I don't know about you, but for me that last bit about the dead man was a genuine shocker. Did they bring him down the chimney and he got caught on the pot-hook or is there the implication they were about to roast him for dinner?

The detail about the saddles thrown on the roof causing the house to become infested with what sounds like a poltergeist perhaps echoes the idea of bewitched bridles used to turn humans to horses for witches to ride. I've read elsewhere that saddles and tack were stored on the roofs of the Norse turf buildings to keep them from being gnawed by predators, but I do not know if this is true.

Was the food set out at Christmas a gesture of hospitality for travelers or was it the same custom mentioned in Barbara Rieti's *Strange Terrain: The Fairy World in Newfoundland,* where food is left for the dead or the fairies to eat on Christmas Eve? And is this where the custom of leaving cookies and milk for Santa Claus arose?

The second story is a fairy abduction story with, unusually, something of a happy ending.

The Girl Who Was Taken

This tale was collected by O.K. Odegaard in Valdres (eastern Norway) before 1913. It is printed in O.K. Odegaard, Gamal Tru og Gamal Skjikk ifraa Valdres, p. 103

Tradition has given the girl in this story of the name of Guro, which is generally associated with the leader of "the terrible host." The members of the host are in this tale called *haug*-folk (the people of the mounds) since legend tellers tend to call different supernatural beings by the same generalized names.

Guro Ljoseng went out to the *stabbur* for bread one *Imber* evening [one of the three evenings before Christmas]. She did not come in again, and for all they searched, no trace of her did they find. Then it occurred to them that she could have been taken into a mountain, and so they were given permission to ring the church bells to get her out again. They rang for three days. But the ringing did not help, and so they stopped, because they knew that the ones who had taken her would not let her out again.

At Hansebu, at that time, there lived some spry fellows. They were called The "Hansebu Boys." One of them, ol' Jacob—Hanse-Jacob he was called—got drunk one *Imber* evening. Then he started bragging loudly and showing off. Among other things, he swore that there was no such thing as *haug*-folk!

Ol' Fosse sat listening to this, and became angry at such nonsense and said, "You'd better be careful about saying things like that, Jacob. If you dare to lie down by Ljoseng wicket tonight, it just might happen that you'll get to see what you least expect!" There's a fork there, a crossroads, and it's just at such crossroads that one can see *haug*-folk on an *Imber* evening.

"Well," said Jacob, "I'm not afraid to do that!" Ad later on that evening, just at midnight, he wandered up to Ljoseng wicket and lay down full length in the snow by the fork, and then he stretched out his arms so he looked like a cross. He had not been lying there long when a great company came riding up. First rode a huge, blue-clad man on a splendid black horse. He had a nose so long that it reached all the way down to the pommel of the saddle, and his legs were so long that they all but dangled down on the road. All the others had splendid horses too, and fine saddles and bridles, and halters with rings in them, so it almost sounded like they were full of sleigh bells.

When the first rider saw Jacob, he said, "Ow! There lies a cross!" And all the others said the same thing too when they saw Jacob. But last in the company rode a woman, and when she laid eyes on Jacob she said, "That's no cross! That's just ol' Hanse-Jacob!" Then he recognized her; it was Guro Ljoseng. He asked her why she had stayed away so long, and how she had come to be in such company. "Things have gone well with me," she said. "My husband is Tostein Langbein, who's riding first. He took me up on his

horse on *Imber* evening, when I went out to the *stabbur* for bread, and rode with me to a hill by Okshoved in Slidre. It was good they stopped ringing. When they did, I'd come all the way down by the fence at Ljoseng. If they'd kept it up just a little longer, I would have come home, but then I would not have had a day's good health since. Now I'm Tostein's woman and live as well off as if it was Christmas all the time!"

Hanse-Jacob looked at her, and she had on fine clothes all the way down to her feet, but around her feet she had bound some rags. Then he asked why that was. That, she said, was because her people had given all her clothes away to beggars, but not the shoes. She asked Jacob to tell her folks that they had to give away the shoes too; then she'd get good shoes on her feet, she said. Now she was on her way to Ryseberg to a feast; and away they rode.

But since that time, ol' Hanse-Jacob was not so skeptical when there was talk of *haug*-folk!

Folktales of Norway, Reidar Christiansen pp. 77-78

In the story of the woman abducted by the *haug*-folk, we see motifs also found in the fairy- and folklore of Ireland: the worlds of the dead and of fairy are interchangeable: the fairies live in burial mounds; the dead live in fairy-land. There is also an Irish belief that if you give a pair of shoes to the poor in honor of one who has died, that person will have shoes in the afterlife/purgatory, where solid footwear was essential. It may even harken back to the Greek story of the man who was plagued by his dead wife because one of her sandals had fallen from the funeral pyre and was not consumed. Burning the shoe (along with a whole new wardrobe) placated the clothes-conscious spirit.

It is curious that Guro Ljoseng says that she was drawn by the bells, but would never have been healthy if brought back from *haug*-folk land. When human babies are returned by the fairies, they are almost always happy and healthy; some were even healed by their fairy fosterers. What would be different about a return of an adult?

But I have wandered far from the perils of the Norwegian Christmas season. If we take anything away from these tales, let it be this useful message: like vampires, fairies and Wild Huntsmen fear the cross. No need to carry one when it's every man his own crucifix. Remember that if you find yourself in Norway at Christmas.

Modern tales of *haug*-folk, who have much in common with the Icelandic *huldufólk*? chriswoodyard8 AT gmail.com

Chris Woodyard is the author of *The Victorian Book of the Dead, The Ghost Wore Black, The Headless Horror, The Face in the Window*, and the 7-volume *Haunted Ohio* series. She is also the chronicler of the adventures of that amiable murderess Mrs Daffodil in *A Spot of Bother: Four Macabre Tales*. The books are available in paperback and for Kindle. Indexes and fact sheets for all of these books may be found by searching hauntedohiobooks.com. Join her on FB at Haunted Ohio by Chris Woodyard or The Victorian Book of the Dead.

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Russian man drives into airport, says he did it for love

yahoo.com

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian man who drove his car into an airport terminal and reached the departure gates says he did it for love.

The Kazan airport administration says an intoxicated man rammed through the terminal's door late Wednesday and drove around inside. Video footage shows a battered, Russian-made car drive past the check-in desk and into a departure gate before it reached a railway terminal outside.

News website Kazansky Reporter on Friday quoted 40-year old Ruslan Nurtdinov, who told a court hearing that he had planned his route carefully: "I had to get on the platform. I was fighting for love!"

Nurtdinov said his lady friend was arriving at the railway platform, and this was his way to greet her.

The airport said no one was hurt in the incident.

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Santa renews pilot's license: Transport Canada

yahoo.com

OTTAWA (Reuters) - Santa Claus successfully renewed his commercial pilot's license, passing a written exam as well as a health check - despite high sugar levels - and is good to fly for Christmas, Canada's transportation department said on Thursday.

Santa was given his pilot's license renewal by Transport Minister Marc Garneau, a former astronaut, according to a video released on Twitter by Transport Canada. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBy2kB41knw)

"Santa, I've got good news for you, once again you've aced your pilot's exam so here is your certificate," Garneau tells the man, dressed in a fur-trimmed red suit and hat and wearing black gloves.

The video shows the elderly gift-giver completing a vision screening test composed entirely of the letters H and O, and handing over a urine sample.

"Your health is good. Your sugar levels are a little bit high, but you are cleared to go, so that's the good news," Garneau told Santa, who responded with laughter.

Garneau also warned Santa against distracted driving: "Just a reminder, don't use your cellphone, and don't do any texting while you're driving your sleigh through the skies."

(Reporting by Andrea Hopkins; Editing by Dan Grebler)

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Sheep's head, prosthetic leg and London house among most unusual UK charity donations

yahoo.com

By Lin Taylor

LONDON (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - British shoppers seeking last-minute Christmas presents may want try their luck at charity stores after a 19th century vase, an original Kermit the Frog puppet and a rare military medal were named among the most unusual gifts donated to good causes.

Animals were also popular items, with a sheep's head, two canaries and a live ferret among many bizarre gifts given to charities, according to the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

"People think about giving money, but it is fascinating to see all the surprising and strange items which have been donated to charities either via charity shops or bequeathed as legacies," said Joanna Walker, who oversees private donations at CAF.

CAF said a 19th century vase valued at 2,400 pounds (\$2,950) was spotted in an Oxfam charity shop. Other donations included a prosthetic leg, a wedding dress used in British TV show Coronation Street, and a Victoria Cross Medal which honors acts of bravery in war.

But perhaps the most extravagant gifts were properties bequeathed by private donors, including a central London townhouse and countryside cottage.

There are around 10,500 charity shops across Britain, generating about 300 million pounds (\$369 million) a year, CAF said.

(Reporting by Lin Taylor @linnytayls, Editing by Katie Nguyen)

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THE BASILISK AND THE COCKATRICE - MONSTROUS MYTHOLOGY OR REPTILIAN REALITY? blogspot.com



Dr KARL SHUKER

Friday, 23 December 2016

THE BASILISK AND THE COCKATRICE - MONSTROUS MYTHOLOGY OR REPTILIAN REALITY?



The basilisk (above left) and the cockatrice (right), depictions from medieval bestiaries (public domain)

Two of classical mythology's most feared reptilian monsters were the basilisk and the cockatrice. But were they really nothing more than legends and fables – or could they have been inspired by various real-life creatures?

THE BASILISK

Today, the only basilisks known to herpetologists are those very eyecatching but totally harmless Latin American iguanid lizards of the genus *Basiliscus*, famous for their remarkable ability to sprint bipedally across the surface of ponds – hence their lesser-known alternative name of Jesus Christ lizards. However, they derive their more familiar name from a very different, allegedly lethal reptile from the Old World, and which supposedly existed there during medieval times – the original basilisk.

The harmless real-life basilisk lizard (© Markus Bühler)

One of the earliest references to it appeared in Pliny the Elder's magnum opus *Natural History* (c.77-79 AD). On first sight, this inconspicuous serpent dragon, just 3 ft or so long, simply resembled a slender brown snake. On closer inspection, however, it could be seen to bear a regal crown of gold upon its head (hence 'basiliskos' - Greek for 'little king'). And when it moved, it raised



much of its body vertically upwards in a proud, fearless stance, eschewing the lowly belly-crawling mode of locomotion typifying ordinary serpents.

The basilisk had every reason to be fearless. According to popular lore, its merest glance was enough to kill almost any living creature instantly – including another basilisk (and even itself if it somehow caught sight of its own reflection). The tiniest drop of venom dribbling from its jaws was ample to poison the earth upon which it fell, or the water into which it dripped. And the faintest breath

that it exhaled was sufficient to transform the land for many miles in every direction from fertile pastures into arid desert. Indeed, the very existence of the deserts where the basilisk lived, in North Africa and Arabia, was said to have been directly caused by its baleful presence.

In short, the basilisk was virtually invulnerable. Thankfully, however, it was also very uncommon, and could be warded off with a sprig of the rue plant. Moreover, it could be killed outright by the rank odour of urine from a weasel – an aspect of the basilisk legend that may have been inspired at least in part by tales emanating from the Orient of cobras confronted and dispatched by mongooses.



Basilisk, in Conrad Gesner's *Historiae Animalium*, vol 5, 1587 (public domain)

The basilisk's origin was just as uncanny as its appearance and capabilities, and explained why this diminutive but much-dreaded monster was so rare. A basilisk was only created if the egg of a serpent were hatched by a rooster (cockerel) – a bizarre event which (thankfully!) was hardly likely to happen very frequently.

Despite its formidable nature, medieval alchemists were very keen to possess the ashes of a dead basilisk, because they believed that this scarce, precious matter

could transmute silver into gold. Some scholars, such as Theophilus Presbyter (fl. c.1070-1125), even believed that a basilisk could be magically created via a detailed recipe of ingredients and reactions, and that the resulting creature would convert copper into Spanish gold.

Although traditionally said to inhabit the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East, the basilisk could claim a number of counterparts elsewhere in the world too. For example, in bygone ages the town of Baunei in the province of Ogliastra on the Italian island of Sardinia was terrorised by a basilisk-like monster that lived in the bushes there and was known as the scultone or ascultone. Just like the basilisk, its gaze was sufficient to kill anyone or anything that looked directly at it, but unlike the basilisk it was immortal. Nevertheless, Peter the Apostle finally managed to rid Baunei of this menace using a mirror, though the precise manner in which he accomplished the feat remains unclear.

Scultone (public domain)



In Gambia, Senegal, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau in West Africa, traditional lore tells of a greatly-feared serpent dragon known as the ninki-nanka. Not only did it possess supernatural powers, it also concealed a precious diamond inside its head, from which it drew these powers. Moreover, echoing the odd manner in which a basilisk was created, a ninki-nanka was only hatched from an egg that was present in the very centre of a clutch of normal python eggs.

South America's basilisk equivalent, the basilisco, was toad-like rather than serpentine, and could only be hatched from a black egg. Accounts of this creature come from Santiago del Estero, the Mapuche area, and the northwestern region of Argentina.

Is it conceivable, however, that belief in such bizarre, fictitious monsters as the basilisk and its cohorts elsewhere around the world was derived at least in part from sightings of unusual but genuine creatures?



Ringhals spitting cobra *Hemachatus haemachatus* (© Lee R. Berger/Wikipedia – CC BY-SA 2.5 licence)

The original basilisk, supposedly inhabiting North Africa's deserts, and whose merest glance could kill, may have been inspired by a very specific and unusual type of real-life snake – the spitting cobra. Several species are recognised (some of which are native to North Africa), and all of them incapacitate their prey or potential aggressors by spitting accurately, and from some distance away, a stream of corrosive venom into their eyes (click here to watch a short YouTube video of a spitting cobra doing precisely this to a snake handler - happily, the handler is wearing protective glasses!). Early travellers' tales of this remarkable ability could have been elaborated over generations of retelling into the basilisk's fatal glance.

In addition, the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East are home to a small, harmless species of colubrid snake known as the awl-headed sand snake *Lytorhynchus diadema*. The diadem-like markings upon its head and its yellowish-brown body colouration recall traditional descriptions of the basilisk's appearance and may therefore have helped to inspire belief in the latter.

Incidentally, a spitting cobra brought to England during the early 1600s as an exotic pet or exhibit that later escaped into the countryside could provide a plausible identity for a 10-ft-long serpent dragon reported from St Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, West Sussex, in August 1614. According to a pamphlet circulated at that time (which is the original source of this report and was subsequently republished in the *Harleian Miscellany*, 1744-1753), it killed two people, two dogs, and several cattle by spitting venom at them, but did not try to devour them.

Illustration of the St Leonard's Forest dragon from the original pamphlet of 1614 (public domain)



Nor are spitting cobras the only potential link between the basilisk of folklore and certain unexpected creatures of fact. Chickens are often infected with parasitic gut-inhabiting worms, including the ascarid roundworm *Ascaris lineata*, a nematode species that can grow to a few inches in length (a related giant species in humans can grow to over 1 ft in length!). They are often passed out of the bird's gut when it defaecates. Unlike in mammals, however, the bird's gut and its reproductive system share a common external passageway and opening – the cloaca. Sometimes, therefore, an ascarid worm ejected from the gut finds its way into the bird's reproductive system rather than being excreted into the outside world, and moves into the oviduct. Once here, however, it becomes incorporated into the albumen of an egg, inside which it remains alive yet trapped when the egg is laid. But as soon as the egg is broken

open to eat by some unsuspecting diner, the worm wriggles its way out of it to freedom, scaring the diner and perpetuating the myth of the basilisk in the process!

On 3 March 2012, Copenhagen University zoologist Lars Thomas left a message below a short basilisk post of mine (click **here**) on my **Eclectarium of Doctor Shuker** blog, informing me of his own direct experience with this fascinating phenomenon:

I suppose you know, that some legends say young basilisk "worms" could sometimes be found in chicken eggs. Indeed if you found a worm in an egg, not so very long ago, old folks would tell you it was a basilisk, and tell you how to get rid of it. When I was 8 years old, I was on holiday at my aunt who had a small farm. One day I was helping her in the kitchen cracking eggs, and in one of them was a worm. Auntie told me it was a young basilisk, and that I should very carefully take it out in her garden and bury it, and then walk three times around the filled up hole. So I did, but not before making a drawing of the egg and the worm. I still got the drawing.



Ascaris, a parasitic nematode or roundworm (public domain)

Judging from this telling little vignette, burying traditional belief in basilisks is clearly much harder to do than burying the supposed basilisk itself!

THE COCKATRICE

During the Middle Ages, the small yet deadly basilisk underwent a very dramatic transformation in mythology, metamorphosing into a much bigger, truly grotesque type of two-legged, wyvern-like dragon known as a cockatrice, However, there is much confusion and terminological

interchange relating to this, with many unequivocal cockatrices often being referred to incorrectly as basilisks.

Cockatrice statue at Trsat Castle in Rijeka, Croatia (© Georges Jansoone/Wikipedia – CC BY-SA 3.0 licence)



Muddying the mythological waters even further, moreover, an intriguing, seemingly intermediate version with multiple limb pairs and a horizontal body but a wattled, cockerel-like head (yet still bearing a regal crown) was also popularly illustrated in bestiaries during that time, and was variously referred to as a basilisk or as a cockatrice, depending upon the chronicler in question.



Swedish artist and film-maker Richard Svenson's vibrant, colourful representation of the intermediate, multi-limbed stage in the basilisk-to-cockatrice transformation (above), inspired by bestiary depictions of it (e.g. below, from Serpentum et Draconum Historiae by Ulisse Aldrovandi, 1640) (© Richard Svensson / public domain)



During its transformation from the basilisk, the cockatrice gained a pair of large bat-like wings, a long coiled tail (still covered in scales but often terminating in a sharp sagittal tip), and a

single pair of sturdy rooster-like legs that enabled it to walk upright. Furthering its cockerel parallels, however, it also sported a coxcomb on its head, a pair of pendulous facial wattles, a pointed horny beak, sometimes a covering of feathers upon its body, and even the ability to crow like a farmyard rooster too.



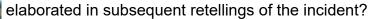
Cockatrice fleeing from a weasel wrapped in rue, illustrated by Wenceslaus Hollar, 1600s (public domain)

Even so, this weird avian reptile (or reptilian bird?) retained the basilisk's deadly gaze, its dread of weasels and rue, and also, albeit in a reversed version, its bizarre mode of creation. Now, one of these monstrous entities would only arise if a round leathery shell-less egg laid by a seven-year-old cockerel when the dog star Sirius was in the ascendant was hatched by a toad in a dung heap. Although such an occurrence may seem highly unlikely, cockatrices were reported not just in North Africa and Arabia like their basilisk antecedent but also widely through Europe, including

several examples from Britain.

Cockatrice in Raoul Lefèvre's tome *Histoires de Troyes Belgique*, 1400s (public domain)

One of the most recent of these was the Renwick cockatrice. Crowing loudly, this bat-winged horror, black in colour but sporting facial wattles and a coxcomb, reputedly emerged from the foundations of a church being demolished by workmen in the Cumbrian village of Renwick in 1733. Happily, the monster was dispatched by local hero John Tallantine with a sturdy wooden lance hewn from a rowan tree - famed for its magical, evil-repelling properties. If such an event truly took place, might the offending creature have been merely a large bat, whose proportions were duly exaggerated and







Is this what the so-called Renwick cockatrice looked like? (public domain)

Iceland is not a country well known for dragon legends, but its traditional lore does lay claim to its own version of the cockatrice – a deadly creature called the skoffin. It has a very curious origin – the highly unlikely outcome of a liaison between a male fox and a

female cat (the offspring of the reverse pairing – between a tom cat and a vixen – is called a skuggabaldur, and is just as ferocious as a skoffin). Similar in form to the cockatrice, albeit furry rather than feathery, the skoffin also shared the latter's lethal gaze - and could even kill another skoffin simply by looking it in the eye. Otherwise, it was virtually invincible, unless shot with a silver button upon which the sign of the Cross had been inscribed (click **here** to see a depiction of a skoffin as featured on an Icelandic postage stamp).



Cockatrice in German Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher's *Mundus Subterraneus*, 1665 (public domain)

Continuing this intriguing link between cockatrices and Christianity, it may come as a surprise to learn that the cockatrice was formerly mentioned no less than four times within the Old Testament of the Bible, three of these mentions occurring in the Book of Isaiah, and the fourth in the Book of Jeremiah. The Hebrew terms that were once translated as 'cockatrice' were 'Tsepha' and 'Tsiphoni', but in modernday versions they are translated as 'viper' or 'adder' instead, thus explaining the cockatrice's disappearance from this holy book.



Cockatrice illustrated in a German manuscript from 1507 (public domain)

Iceland is not unique in boasting its own specific form of cockatrice. So too does Korea – the gye-ryong ('chicken-dragon'). Just as Oriental dragons are generally more benevolent than malevolent, however, so too is this Korean cockatrice, often pulling the chariots of notable legendary heroes or those of their parents.

Cockatrice, by Friedrich Johann Justin Bertuch, 1806 (public domain)



Thanks to its rooster-like coxcomb, wattles, feathers, and crowing cry, the cockatrice was a very unusual dragon. And as befitting this, it may well have had a comparably odd origin in the real world.



A very gallinaceous faux cockatrice participating as the Basilisk of Reus in the 2016 Cercavila de les festes del Barri Gòtic, in Barcelona, Spain (© Pere López Brosa/Wikipedia – CC BY-SA 3.0 licence)

Sometimes, an otherwise normal hen develops an

internal tumour that stimulates the development of male hormones. These in turn induce the development of male secondary sex characteristics – namely, the rooster's coxcomb, wattles, crowing cry, and even on occasion its plumage. Yet it still lays eggs. In bygone, superstition-laden times, the mere sight of such a bizarre curiosity as one of these partial sex-change 'father hens' would have been enough to initiate imaginative fear-laden tales of the dreaded cockatrice.

Strutting super-rooster is a real gender bender

Will a staffer freshift the excelerate of the staff of th



THE BASILISK AND COCKATRICE IN CRYPTOZOOLOGY?

that I can attribute it fully)

Finally: In modern times, there have been several eyewitness reports emanating from isolated regions of verdant vegetation

Bristol Postnewspaper report concerning a sex-change

unknown to me - any details would be very welcome, so

chicken - click it to read it (© *Bristol Post*, reproduced here on a strictly non-commercial, educational/review

basis only; report's date of publication currently

amid the otherwise arid desert zones of Morocco and Tunisia that tell of very large snakes bearing a crest or long 'hair' on their head. Such reports readily recall the legendary basilisk, in terms of both location and these snakes' morphology, so could they explain this much-dreaded reptile? Assuming that these snakes are themselves real, it has been suggested that they may constitute relict populations of pythons, analogous to isolated populations of desert-dwelling crocodiles, and that their supposed crests or hair are merely segments of incompletely-shed skin.

Crested mystery snakes are even more commonly reported in tropical Africa, where they have a wide variety of local names, of which the most familiar is the inkhomi ('killer'), but in English parlance they are generally referred to as crowing crested cobras (see also a previous ShukerNature blog article of mine surveying these ophidian enigmas – click **here**). They are said to sport a bright-red

rooster-like coxcomb (but pointing forwards rather than back) and facial wattles too, and to crow just like a rooster as well – all of which is very reminiscent of the basilisk's transformed equivalent, the cockatrice. In 1944, Dr J. Shircore from Malawi published a detailed description of what he believed to be the fleshy coxcomb and part of the neck from one of these snakes, but the current whereabouts of this potentially-valuable specimen is not known.



Crowing crested cobra representation, based upon eyewitness reports (© Dr Karl Shuker)

Equally noteworthy is a published report by John Knott from September 1962 in which he recalled how, driving home one evening in late May 1959 from Binga, in the Kariba area of what was then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), he inadvertently ran over a large, jet-black snake roughly 6 ft long, mortally wounding it. Knott cautiously stepped out of his vehicle to take a closer look at the snake, and was amazed to see that it bore a distinct crest upon its head, perfectly symmetrical in shape, and capable of being erected by way of five internal prop-like structures. This certainly does not sound like a piece of unshed skin but rather like a true crest, yet no known species of snake possesses one.

Remarkably, a very similar but somewhat shorter mystery snake, complete with coxcomb, wattles, and crowing ability, has been reported in modern times, and by native and Western observers alike, on the West Indian islands of Jamaica and Hispaniola. If such snakes as these on record from Africa and the Caribbean are genuine, they may well have assisted in inspiring the cockatrice legend.



A magnificent heraldic cockatrice (public domain)

They may no longer possess the lethal talents originally ascribed to them, but judging from reports such as those noted above, it may be somewhat premature to discount the basilisk and the cockatrice as wholly imaginary after all.

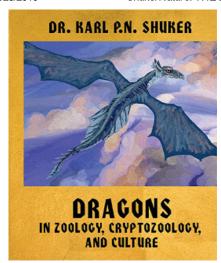


Cockatrice (labelled as as basilisk) and weasel, in Bestiary, Royal MS 12 C XIX, 1200-1210 (public domain)

This ShukerNature blog article is

adapted from the relevant sections of my newest, massively-comprehensive dragon book *Dragons in Zoology, Cryptozoology, and Culture* – a must-read for all draconophiles everywhere!

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Someone dialled 999 because a cat was following them down the road reportuk.org

By Metro -December 19, 2016

A woman thought a cat hissing at her and someone who took their dog to be groomed but found that it had been shaved have all wasted time on 999 calls.

Police have revealed some of the most pointless calls they've received from Londoners and want people to consider if it really is an emergency.

The Met Police have released a list of 12 calls which did not require a response including a caller who said their dog was shaved instead of trimmed by a groomer and another who said they needed a lift home.

The increase in demand on the 999 service over the past 12 months is thought to be, in part, due to factors such as an increasing population and the reduction of some out-of-hours services by other service providers.

This increase has impacted upon service levels with 999 call handlers answering 999 calls, on average, in 11 seconds, with 75 per cent of calls answered within 10 seconds.

Chief Superintendent Pippa Mills, who leads the Met's Command and Control Unit (MetCC), said: 'Although the majority of people who require police assistance use the numbers correctly, there are still too many calls to emergency lines where the 999 number is being used as an information service.

'In many cases a simple internet search would provide the answer to the question posed by the caller.'

She said the 999 number must be reserved for situations where a crime is actually in progress or someone is in danger, adding that calling the 101 number does not change the police response people would get in a non-emergency situation.

Extracts from 12 inappropriate 999 calls made to police this year

'I am [at] Heathrow and I have left one of my bags in a taxi?'

'I have seen a fox walking outside the window and I wanted to report it in case it's dangerous.'

'Basically, I'm in N8 and I'm trying to get home to Finsbury Park and I don't have any money on me for a taxi – I want police to come and pick me up and take me home...'

'My mum put a deposit down on a fridge freezer and they haven't delivered it – they keep changing the delivery date...'

'I'm lost and I'm looking for a building that I can't find, can you tell me where it is?'

'I sent back my headphones because they are faulty and the manufacturer said they haven't received them...'

'There was a bird in the store but it's ok, someone has removed it now...'

'I want to report that I have lost my driving licence...'

'I have a dispute, I took my dog to be groomed and they shaved him instead of trimming him.'

'There is a cat following me down the road and it keeps hissing...'

'What time do the betting shops close in N18?'

'Can you give me the number for the non-emergency police?'

http://metro.co.uk/

All the latest news from http://Metro.co.uk .

December 19, 2016

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By Peter Burke - Local10.com Managing Editor Posted: 2:41 PM, December 19, 2016



Nastassia Brown is accused of hitting another woman with a frying pan.

SUNRISE. Fla. - A South Florida woman was arrested Saturday after she struck another woman in the head with a frying pan because she was making rude comments about her friend, police said.

Nastassia Brown, 27, faces a charge of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon.

More Weird News Headlines

According to a Sunrise police report,

Brown struck Leonie Pascoe in the head with a frying pan multiple times.

Pascoe told police she was speaking to her child's father when Brown started verbally attacking her and charged at her, hitting her twice in the head with a frying pan that she had been holding behind her back.

Brown claimed she overheard Pascoe making rude comments about her friend, so she went inside and got a frying pan because she was going to confront Pascoe.

According to the report, Brown swung at Pascoe with the frying pan, but she said she never hit her with it. Brown said her friend intervened and separated the women.

Police said the formation of a large hematoma -- like a bruise but more severe -- was visible on the side of Pascoe's forehead. Pascoe was treated by paramedics at the scene.

Brown was being held Monday morning at the main Broward County jail on a bond of \$2,500.

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The surprising origins of famous Christmas carols

By Mark Forsyth 20 December 2016

bbc.com

BBC

The familiar tunes never fail to get us in the festive mood – but many of them have remarkably un-Christmassy roots, writes Mark Forsyth.



The Christmas carol service was invented in Truro in 1880 by a chap called Edward

(Credit: Alamy)

WhiteBenson. The story goes that on Christmas Eve everybody in Truro would get disgustingly drunk, and that the Bishop of Truro (Benson) was so disgusted that he decided to lure everybody out of the pub and into the church with his new service.

The problem with this story is that there's no evidence that that's what motivated Benson. And we do know a lot about him. He later became Archbishop of Canterbury and his whole family had something of a mania for writing. His wife had 39 lesbian lovers. How do we know that? Because she kept a diary, and numbered them. One of his sons was the eminent gay novelist EF Benson. Another was the eminent gay poet Arthur Benson.



Edward White Benson

Edward White Benson was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1883 until his death in 1896 (Credit: Getty)

Arthur wrote the words to Land of Hope and Glory. He also wrote a diary of four million words, which is often reckoned to be the longest ever. His daughter Margaret was an eminent lesbian Egyptologist. His daughter Nellie actually stole one of her own mother's girlfriends and died of TB.

Astoundingly, there were no grandchildren.

Anyway, in 1880 this family, or rather this hive of oversexed logomania, was in the brand-new diocese of Truro. It was so brand new that they didn't even have a cathedral, just a large shed, and Edward White Benson decided to invent the carol service, perhaps not to get the people out of the

pubs, but to get the carols out. You see, before this, Christmas carols hadn't been sung in the church, they'd been sung in the pub. Carols were folk songs; originally they were folk dances (that's what 'carol' meant: 'a dance in a ring').

Why would you see three ships come sailing by? The answer is that nobody knows

This is why so many of them are really rather odd. Why would you see three ships come sailing by? The answer is that nobody knows. It was just a song that in some versions involved Jesus on Christmas day in the morning, and in other versions involved three pretty girls on New Year's Day. It doesn't make any sense anyway as a Christmas hymn because Bethlehem is landlocked. The same thing goes for The Holly and the Ivy. There is a religious version, but there are also versions that are just about holly and ivy, and the fascinating question of which one is better.

Hark! Who goes there?

Then in the 18th and 19th Centuries folklorists started to collect these folk songs and smarten them up, and people started to write new ones. But even these new ones were a bit incoherent and the versions changed all the time. For example, the co-founder of Methodism Charles Wesley wrote a beautiful carol that began:

Hark how all the welkin rings Glory to the King of Kings Peace on earth and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled.



Truro Cathedral

Truro was a new diocese of the Church of England in 1880 when its bishop Edward White Benson invented the carol service, which was held in the city's cathedral (Credit: Alamy)

And that's how the carol went for 20 years, until another preacher called George Whitefield published a new version that went:

Hark, the herald angels sing Glory to the new-born King!

Wesley was not in the slightest bit amused by this (probably because the Bible is quite clear that the herald angels who appear to the shepherds saytheir news, they don't sing it). He wrote that he didn't wantto be held "accountable either for the nonsense or for the doggerel of other men". But he is. Look in any hymnbook and Hark the Herald Angels Sing will be clearly listed: words by Wesley, tune by Mendelssohn.

We have been carolling away against the explicit wishes of both the lyricist and the composer

Mendelssohn would be even more perplexed and vexed by the whole thing. He died without ever even hearing of the hymn. All he did was to write a song about Gutenberg. It was precisely 400

years since the invention of the printing press and Mendelssohn knocked out a song about it. However, he realised that once the anniversary had passed, it would probably need some new words as songs about type aren't that popular. He wrote in a letterthat he didn't mind what new words were written just so long as they weren't religious. Then he died, and a few years later somebody noticed that the tune would work very well with Hark the Herald Angels Sing and that was that. And ever since then people have been carolling away unaware that they are going against the explicit, written wishes of both the lyricist and the composer.

Bohemian rhapsody

Good King Wenceslas is an even odder business. Good King Wenceslas was a real chap, except he wasn't a king and he wasn't called Wenceslas, but he may have been good. His name was Vaclay and he was Duke of Bohemia in the 10th Century. Poor little Vaclay had a difficult childhood. His father died when he was a child and he was brought up partly by his mother and partly by his paternal grandmother. These two ladies did not get along at all well, especially as his mother was pagan and his grandma was Christian. Eventually, his mother solved the problem by the timehonoured method of dealing with difficult mothers-in-law: she had her assassinated – strangled with a veil, to be precise. Then Vaclav came of age and employed the time-honoured method of dealing with overbearing mothers: he exiled her.

After that Vaclay started his career of do-goodery. He would potter about his dukedom, especially at night, giving stuff to the poor. An early biography says: "Rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched."



The words of the carol Good King Wenceslas are based on the life of a Vaclay, a 10th Century Duke of Bohemia (Credit: Alamy)

Given that he was the duke, I would have thought that he could just free the prisoners. And I don't think much of prisons that anybody can break into in the middle of the night. Mind you, I also don't see what he had against shoes; and I shall never know now that he's dead

If I had a brother named Boleslaus the Cruel, I would watch out

You see, Vaclav still had one family member left, his brother Boleslaus the Cruel. Now, if I had a brother with a name like that, I would watch out. It's a dead giveaway. I would employ bodyguards. I would watch my back like a hawk. But Vaclav didn't and Boleslaus and a few of his friends assassinated him in 935. It is a sad truth, but a certain one, that Good King Wenceslas did *not* look out.

But where (I hear you cry) was Wenceslas' faithful page in all this, the one who followed him around in the snow? Well, his name was Podevin and he doesn't seem to have been there at the

assassination; instead he showed his Christian charity by taking out one of the assassins in a revenge killing before being chased, cornered in a forest, and killed.



Choristers in Kings College, Cambridge

The most famous carol service is the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols held each year in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge (Credit: Alamy)

Boleslaus was still wiping the blood off his lance when he was told that his wife had given birth to a son. So he called him Strachkvas, which means 'Dreadful Feast'. Then he got on with being cruel and the Bohemians started to get all nostalgic for the days of Vaclav.

Soon Vaclav was declared a saint, and then he was posthumously declared king by Otto the Great.

There's something so Christmassy about Jingle Bells even though it never mentions Christmas

Then, 500 years later, someone in Finland wrote a song about the coming of spring. It was a nice, bouncy tune with nice bouncy words, but it was Finnish and nobody noticed what a good melody it was until 300 years after that, when an Englishman called John Mason Neale found the obscure Finnish tune and the obscure (in England) Bohemian saint and put the two together. Why the hell he did this, nobody really knows, but he did and it was published in 1853. Neale was an odd chap. He once wrote a history of church pews.

There's just something so timelessly English about Away in a Manger, O Little Town of Bethlehem and We Three Kings, even though they're all from the US. There's something so Christmassy about Wenceslas and Ding Dong Merrily on High and Jingle Bells even though none of them mentions Christmas, and Jingle Bells (which is also American) was written about Thanksgiving.

But somehow these carols work, and so do all the others. It may be something to do with Edward White Benson's skill in laying out the carol service, or it may be the eggnog.

Extracted from A Christmas Cornucopia by Mark Forsyth © 2016, published by Viking.

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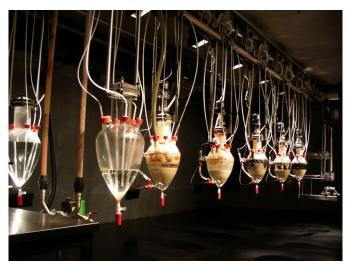
by Melissa Lesnie August 12, 2014



Unless otherwise stated, images courtesy of the Museum of Old and New Art

Something stinks in Tasmania. "Where else in the world," I asked myself, pinching my nostrils, "would one of the main cultural attractions be a machine that produces feces?" I was standing uncomfortably close

to what has become a major draw at the Museum of Old and New Art: *Cloaca Professional*, by Belgian artist Wim Delvoye. It simulates the human digestive process — daily feedings yielding deposits of excrement in glass receptacles. I found myself wishing I'd visited the nearby Cadbury chocolate factory instead — not that I felt like eating.



Wim Delvoye's Cloaca Professional, affectionately known as "the poop machine" (photograph by Doug Beckers)

All day long, tourists and locals cheerfully ask staff to direct them to the "poo machine." This baffling apparatus is one of many controversial works on display at MONA, the labyrinthine fortress of sandstone and steel that has reshaped the landscape of Tasmania (and transformed the island's tourism industry) since it opened its doors early 2011 with the largest private art collection in

the southern hemisphere.

It's the \$101 million brainchild of David Walsh, Hobart's resident eccentric multimillionaire, who amassed his vast fortune as a professional gambler and funneled it into sharing his (some say questionable) taste with Tasmania and the world. It's very much his personal playground — the only art gallery I know of built on a winery (Walsh's own Moorilla vineyard), with tennis courts at the entrance and peacocks strutting the grounds. Did I mention the indoor trampoline?

Inside MONA (photograph by Rob Taylor)

Take the very arty MONA ROMA ferry across the Derwent River and you'll arrive at a strange oasis carved out of the Berriedale peninsula. A glass spiral staircase tunnels 17 meters down through three levels of vast sandstone walls and Corten steel columns. Nonda Katsalidis's enigmatic





building, with 6,000 square meters of gallery space, is a marvel even before you start to notice all the freaky art lying around. Who needs to visit the Cadbury factory when you've got a suicide bomber's remains cast in Belgian chocolate?

Not far off, there's a 1,500-year-old Egyptian sarcophagus whose interior remains are displayed via CAT scans. Some gallery walls are adorned variously with rows of rotting cow carcasses and 151 porcelain vulvas. No divides, no chronology, and no labels – the whole experience of the museum is navigated using "The O" iPhone guide, detecting some 400 exhibits using GPS as you wander past, and imparting what Walsh has termed "Art Wank."



Bit.fall installation by Julius Popp (Photo by Brett Boardman)

It makes sense that Walsh, who has a pet cat named Christ and describes himself as a "rabid atheist," would join forces with undoubtedly the second most eccentric arts lover and public figure in Van Diemen's Land, Brian Ritchie. The Milwaukee-born bassist of cult indie band the Violent Femmes had been living on the island since 2006, when he approached Walsh to bankroll a music festival reflecting MONA's eclecticism, experimental

bent, and anti-establishment ethos. In 2009 they launched the Museum of Old and New Art Festival of Music and Art – quite a mouthful. With the resulting acronym MONA FOMA pared down to MOFO — conveniently, the slang abbreviation for "motherfucker" — one gets a sense of the founders' wicked larrikin streak, two Tassie devils on the loose.

Ritchie is far from your run-of-the-mill aging punk rocker. Trained as a master of the Japanese shakuhachi flute (his chosen middle name Tairaku meaning "big music"), he and his wife Varuni opened an improbable zen tea house in central Hobart. As curator of MOFO and the "Dark MOFO" winter edition of the festival, which begins with a public Nude Solstice Swim in the Derwent, Ritchie has brought out the likes of PJ Harvey, the Dresden Dolls, and Elvis Costello while shining the spotlight on indie and local acts — all surrounded by light and sound installations in the gallery and around the city.

After a few hours exploring the museum, you'll want to re-emerge and take a glass of wine out on the café terrace looking out on the water. No longer perceived by mainlanders as a sleepy, isolated backwater, Tasmania is transforming from its Hicksville reputation into an important global art destination.

If you decide you really like the place and don't want to leave, you can opt to be exhibited there in an urn. As part of a \$75,000 Eternity Membership, your ashes will be interned in style at MONA's purpose-built columbarium. Walsh's father — RIP — is already in situ to keep you company. No crematorium on site... yet.



Museum of Old and New Art is at 655 Main Road, Berriedale, Tasmania.

Melissa Lesnie was a guest of Tourism Tasmania and the Museum of Old and New Art during MONA FOMA. She stayed at the Salamanca Inn.

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The Finfolk of Orkney Folklore

Updated on May 23, 2015
18 months ago owlcation.com







As an example of how much the sea impacts Orkney life, these sheep are a special breed which has evolved to eat seaweed. Their stomachs can no longer digest grass.

The Folklore of Orkney

The Orkney Islands possess a folkloric tradition that is both unique and fascinating.

As a small archipelago situated at the cusp of the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, much of the folklore naturally involves tales of fisherman, sea voyages, and legendary creatures emerging from the waters.

Due to the settlement of Orkney by the Norse, the lore of the Islands bears a stronger resemblance to Scandinavian tradition than Celtic.

However, because of the geographic distance from Scandinavia, as well as probable minor influences from the Picts, Orkney's folklore evolved a flavor of its own, with mythic creatures that are not found anywhere else.

The landscape of a place surely must influence the folklore of any region. In folkloric circles, much is said about the landscape of Iceland as an influence on Norse folklore. Iceland is teeming with hot springs, geysers, volcanoes, and fjords. This mystical environment, they say, must fuel the imagination to invent tales of elves and their magical dwellings.

How true this must also be in Orkney. There are many cliffs and natural rock formations around the perimeters of the islands. Severe drops highlight the delineation between land and sea. Juxtaposed next to sheer cliffs are deep blue waves splashing against the rock face to one side, and lush green pastures where animals freely graze on the other. It makes for a contrasting clash of texture and colors.

The sense of wonder in the environment is enhanced by the Northern Lights which can be seen regularly in Orkney, dancing in the night sky. The Orcadian landscape is also dotted with Neolithic ruins and ancient megaliths. It is not difficult to imagine what manner of magic could be afoot when

we picture ourselves on the center of an ancient stone circle and behold the vivid Aurora Borealis shining in the heavens.

The Northern Lights



The Northern Lights are often visible in Orkney.

The Mysterious Finfolk

One mythological race of beings which embodies all of the influences discussed above is the Finfolk, who are unique to Orkney and Shetland. Just as the landscape is a contradiction between wild waters, harsh rocks, and gentle grasses, the Fin Folk are a contradiction in that their race is that of an amphibious sea people who can step out of the water onto land as they choose, and live comfortably between the two worlds.

They are both threatening and benevolent. Known as powerful sorcerers, Finfolk can control the weather. They may reward fishermen with pleasant sea waters, or punish them with treacherous storms. Sometimes, a human may be asked to do a favor for the Finfolk. If so, they will be rewarded with copper coins. But never silver, for Finfolk value silver greatly and are loathe parting with it.

Fin Man



Art artist's rendition of how a Fin Man may look.

Resembling humans in shape and form, Finfolk could be distinguished from Orcadians in a few ways. Unlike Mer-people, whose bodies are traditionally constructed of a fishtail from the waist down, Finfolk were fully humanoid (except for their daughters who *were* mermaids, which is explained below).

The Finfolk were thus named because their bodies were draped by fins that hung in such a way that they fell like the cloth in human clothes. This made differentiating between a Land person and a Fin person difficult at a distance. However, during a face to face interaction, the fins that adorned their bodies would make a Fin person fairly easy to recognize.

Apart from the obvious feature of literal fins, the Finfolk were known for some other features. They were said to be very well built with good proportions, and described as athletic. Renowned for their boating ability, Finfolk traversed the sea without the aid of sails. It was said that they could move from Orkney to Norway with only seven strokes of the oar. And whereas the majority of Orcadians were of Nordic stock, and therefore fair complexioned, the Finfolk were known to be rather swarthy.

There are some differing characteristics between Fin men and Fin women. Fin men were said to have dark, brooding faces and sad eyes. They, apparently, could make deals with human fisherman, enlisting their help in return for compensation. However, if humans were found fishing in seas claimed by Fin fishermen, woe betide them. Fin men were vengeful creatures and not above boring holes in the boats of trespassing humans. However, they were both vengeful and cunning. The

clever Fin men would place the small hole in such a place unlikely to be seen by the fisherman until he was out to sea, and slowly the water trickled in.

A Mermaid with Her Human Lover



Young female Finfolk are Mermaids in Orkney folklore. However, if they fail to land a human husband, they will grow into hideous hags.

Apparently, Fin physiology differs between male and female children. Male Fin children are shaped just as the adults are, in humanoid form. Female Fin children, however, are born with the fish tail of a mermaid, which they wear until they reach maturity when their tail will split into legs. As they develop into young women, the mermaids are enticingly beautiful.

Much of the typical mermaid lore surrounds the Finfolk version. Sailors can be enchanted by the striking beauty of these mermaids and pulled by them into the depths of the sea. But, the mermaids are not all treacherous. For many of these maids, their strongest desire is to marry a human man. If

they marry a human, the mermaid will remain stunningly gorgeous for her entire life. However, if she marries a Fin man, the poor woman is doomed to become a haggard Fin Wife.

Underwater Kingdom



The Land of Finfolkaheem

The Finfolk had their own kingdom called Finfolkaheem. Note that the suffix "heem" is related to the Norse "heim." We see a parallel in the Norse word "Álfheimr," home of the Alfar, or Elves. Located at the bottom of the sea, Finfolkaheem was an underwater paradise.

It was said to be an exquisitely beautiful place, with sprawling gardens of brightly colored sea plants. Finfolk lived in houses made of coral. Larger buildings, also made of coral, were adorned with turrets and towers which glistened with pearls and gemstones. Pearls were plentiful in this realm. And, not just any pearls. These were gigantic pearls the size of boulders! There were so many lying about, that they would be ground into glistening

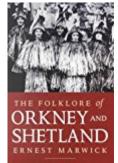
pearl dust, which the mermaids used to powder their tails to make them sparkle.

In the center of Finfolkaheem was a dancing hall. It was a brilliant palace constructed of crystal. Phosphorus from the sea caused the crystal to glow with a misty natural bioluminescence. Within the palace was a concert hall with a large stage. The curtains adorning the stage also shimmered and glowed... for they were made of fabric trimmed from the Northern Lights!

Hildaland - Finfolk's Summer Home

Finfolk preferred to live in Finfolkaheem during the winter months and spend their summers in Hildaland.

Hildaland was said to be a beautiful island paradise. The name means "Hidden Land," and it is related to the Icelandic word "Huldufólk," meaning "hidden people." Huldufólk is the Icelandic term for elves and other mythological beings which are invisible to the human eye.

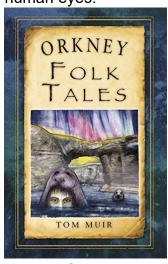


Just as humans in other fairy lore can sometimes glimpse the home of the Fae, Hildaland can occasionally be seen. One way this occurs if a ship is lost in a fog at sea. When the fog lifts, the crew might behold a glistening and magical island before their eyes.

The Vanishing Paradise



Hildaland is the name of the Finfolk's summer home. It is an island paradise that is invisible to human eyes.



The Tale of Annie Norn

Sometimes a person could be taken to Hildaland by the Finfolk. There is a folktale about a young Orcadian lady called Annie Norn who mysteriously disappeared from her home without a trace. The villagers whispered that she had been taken by the fairies, never to return.

One day, many years later, Annie's cousin, Willie Norn, was on a ship from Scotland. He was returning home to Orkney after being away for a long time. A dense fog set in and the ship became disoriented. Suddenly a small boat appeared to be heading toward the ship with only one woman on board. The crew said "she's a Finwife! Don't let her on board!" But, Willie recognized his long lost cousin and assured them there would be no harm.

What Wilie never could have expected is that his cousin was no longer a human, but a true Fishwife. Using her magic, she caused the fog to lift and steered the vessel into the peaceful harbor of Hildaland.

After the sailors were fed and rested, they were guided back to familiar waters by a friendly Finman. But, not without a fee. Afterall, Finfolk do love their silver!

For more like this

Please like my writer's page on Facebook to be updated on future articles.

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The Herbal Cures of Hildegard von Bingen - was she right? -Medievalists.net

medievalists.net

July 24, 2016 by Medievalists.net

Among the many attributes of the Hildegard von Bingen – theologian, composer, abbess and mystic - was that she was a medical writer. Two of her works detail health problems and offers various treatments. A scientific study suggests that her herbal remedies were far more correct than what could be explained by mere chance.



A 12th century depiction of Hildegard of Bingen

explained their analysis:

In their article, "Are the Correct Herbal Claims by Hildegard von Bingen Only Lucky Strikes? A New Statistical Approach" a team of German and Swiss scientists examined the writings of the twelfthcentury German Benedictine abbess - in particular Physica and Causae et Curae. In those works she offers 437 claims of health benefits from 175 different plants. For example, Hildegard explains that cloves are a good remedy against gout, swollen intestines, stuffiness in the head, and hiccups. These remedies could be when consumed on their own, or in other cases mixed with other ingredients.

The scientists wanted to know the likelihood the abbess was correct in her claims, and was this level of accuracy just purely from chance? Here is how they

Our statistical approach is based on the model of the game Battleship where a two-dimensional grid (similar to an Excel spreadsheet) is formed by all the claims known to the author on one axis and the herbs (those still used today) on the other axis. Modern herbal indications (medical uses) are represented as 'ships' which the medieval author tries to hit by randomly tossing a 'missile' into the grid. The hypergeometric distribution gives the probability that x 'correct' indications ('hits') could be drawn from the set of N herb/claim combinations with n 'shots', and the number of 'ships' (today's herb/claim attributions) is M.

They focused their study on 85 plants that are being used today for medical purposes. It found that there were 212 health claims by Hildegard from this group, and 30 of them would be correct according to contemporary standards. If she had been making the claims up randomly, only between 6 and 7 of her cures would have accurate.

The study finds the probability of this happening just by chance is 1 in 10,000,000. They conclude:

The hypothesis that Hildegard could have achieved her 'correct' claims by chance is to be clearly rejected on the basis of the highly significant level of our new statistical procedure. The finding from this approach that medieval medical claims are significantly correlated with modern herbal indications supports the importance of traditional medicinal systems as an empirical source.

They add that European researchers should also be more open to the possibility that herbs might be responsible for a larger variety of remedies – typically these plants are now only associated with one or a small number of medical treatments.

You can read the article "Are the Correct Herbal Claims by Hildegard von Bingen Only Lucky Strikes? A New Statistical Approach," by Bernhard Uehleke, Werner Hopfenmueller, Rainer Stange and Reinhard Saller, appears in *Forschende Komplementärmedizin*, Vol.19 (2012) pp.187-190.

An excerpt from Hildegard von Bingen's Physica: The Complete English Translation of her Classic Work on Health and Healing, by Priscilla Throop (1998):

Rose is cold, and this coldness contains moderation which is useful. In the morning, or at daybreak, pluck a rose petal and place it on your eyes. It draws out the humor and makes them clear. One with small ulcers on his body should place rose petals over them. This pulls the mucus from them. One who is inclined to wrath should take rose and less sage and pulverize them. The sage lessens the wrath, and the rose makes him happy. Rose, and half as much sage, may be cooked with fresh, melted lard, in water, and an ointment made from this. The place where a person is troubled by a cramp or paralysis should be rubbed with it, and he will be better. Rose is also good to add to potions, unquents, and all medications. If even a little rose is added, they are so much better, because of the good virtues of the rose.

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Skeptoid Podcast

In 1944, a strange night prowler is believed to have made poison gas attacks in Illinois. Or was it something else?

by Brian Dunning

Filed under Urban Legends

Skeptoid Podcast #550
December 20, 2016
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The panic played on the innate fears of many people in their beds at home at night: a prowler in the dark, unseen, with a terrible weapon. They were rendered paralyzed, helpless; unconscious and unaware; unable to call for help. It was Mattoon, Illinois, in the autumn of 1944. A number of residents reported waking in the middle of the night to a strange, sickly odor; experiencing various symptoms, including paralysis; and in some cases, seeing a prowler pumping some kind of gas into their house through an open window. The Mad Gasser of Mattoon was never caught, his victims never clearly diagnosed, his motives never revealed. Indeed, his very existence was never even proven. Some say it was merely mass hysteria, or some other skeptical claim. Today we're going to find out what we actually know about the Mad Gasser, and see what lessons the skeptical mind can learn.

First of all, it is important to note a significant historical context to the Mad Gasser attacks: that the United States was currently at war with Nazi Germany. Poison gas attacks were an entirely realistic worry, perhaps even more realistic than many knew: Only two months after the Mad Gasser panic, the Japanese began sending balloons loaded with incendiary bombs against the US west coast. Of some 9,000 launched, about 10% are estimated to have made it all the way, and a few people were even killed by them. In 1944, it was far more prudent than it was paranoid for Illinois residents to worry about German agents possibly roaming around their town with poison gas. Later we learned that gas was only rarely used by any side in World War II (for a variety of reasons), but it had seen widespread use in World War I and concern was well justified.

Mattoon is a small manufacturing town at the junction of two railroads in the midst of endless plains of midwestern agriculture. Its encounter with the Mad Gasser began on the night of September 1, 1944, just as Allied troops in Europe were recapturing France and Belgium and Germany began to

scramble for an advantage. But here, half a world and an ocean away, residents thought themselves safe. A young mother, Aline Kearney, awoke late at night from a strange sweet odor, and when one of her daughters who was in bed with her also woke up with the same complaint, she discovered her legs paralyzed. She called for her visiting sister who came in, and smelled the odor apparently coming from the open window. They called the police, who found nothing, but noted that Mrs. Kearney had recovered from her paralysis. But two hours later, her husband came home from his work driving a cab, and spotted a prowler outside the house. The police were called again, but again, found nothing.

Mattoon's only newspaper, the *Daily Journal-Gazette*, ran the following headline across its front page:

ANESTHETIC PROWLER ON LOOSE

Mrs. Kearney and Daughter First Victims

Both Recover; Robber Fails to Get Into Home

Even for a newspaper, that's a lot of assumptions: first, that these were only the "first" victims; second, that the prowler was using some sort of anesthetic; and third, that he was a robber. But it was enough. Within days, several more people called police saying that they too had been attacked by the prowler they read about in the newspaper. Their stories were published in the paper on September 5, owing to no publications on Sunday and the Labor Day holiday.

And that's when the real melee began. Two more people, upon reading those new stories, reported Mad Gasser attacks to the police. Several more were reported almost every day. The headline read:

MAD ANESTHETIST STRIKES AGAIN

September 10 saw the highest number of reports to police at seven. Each day, the newspapers (by now the story had spread to other papers) devoted more and more space to it. By the 11th, the *Chicago Herald-American* plastered its front page with 1.5-inch type:

STATE HUNTS GAS MADMAN

Over 13 days, a total of 25 attacks were reported. Sometimes a prowler was spotted; once he was reported as appearing to pump the handle of a Flit gun (a handheld spraying device like a bicycle pump with a cylinder of some chemical attached). Always the sweet odor of gas was described, though the symptoms it produced were all over the map. Some reported a burning of the mouth, throat, or lips; some reported nausea; and only a few mentioned the temporary leg paralysis. By the time police arrived, all the symptoms for all the victims had cleared up, and nobody suffered any lasting effects. Neither was any evidence ever found of either a prowler or any kind of gas, except once: One woman reported following the smell to a cloth folded on her front porch, which she picked up and smelled, causing immediate painful irritation to her mouth and throat. When police tested the cloth, they found nothing.

At the height of this small town's small frenzy, bands of citizen vigilantes began patrolling the streets, looking for the prowler. Police warned them that vigilantes could be arrested as well, but as it might have escalated, it stopped. Just as the tiny borders of Mattoon seemed strained with Mad Gassers outside every house, the character of the newspaper reports changed dramatically. The headlines became:

THE MANHUNT FOR MR. NOBODY

They changed from reports of a Mad Gasser to interviews with social psychologists discussing the phenomenon of mass hysteria. And as soon as that became the tone, suddenly there were zero more police reports.

And so, within two weeks of its birth, the Mad Gasser of Mattoon became one of the most famous case studies in mass hysteria. The following year, Donald Johnson, an undergrad at the University of Illinois, wrote the only really scholarly article about the episode, "The Phantom Anesthetist of Mattoon: A Field Study of Mass Hysteria" published in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. His most interesting findings were his graphs of newspaper space in square inches compared to the number of reports that came in, showing a very apparent causal effect. If the morning newspapers dedicated more space to it, more reports would come in that day. And, interestingly, the Mad Gasser was as silent as the newspapers during that initial 2-day Labor Day publishing break. Of course, 25 reports over 13 days is a very small data set, so it's not really valid to call such conclusions definite. But given the lack of evidence to the contrary, most subsequent researchers have agreed that the initial analysis of mass hysteria driven by newspaper reporting was probably the only real cause behind the Mad Gasser.

Adding to the unlikeliness of a more corporeal perpetrator were the reported physiological effects of the alleged gas. There simply aren't any known gases that cause temporary paralysis of the legs, plus all the other effects, yet leave the victim symptom free within the space of only a few minutes. But many writers, especially paranormal writers, have tried hard to make the Mad Gasser into a real attacker.

Both chloroform and ether have often suggested as potential gases that the alleged attacker might have used with his spray gun. Both are popularly associated with anesthesia, and both are said to have a slightly sweet odor or taste. If you took a spray gun and pumped it into the window of a house, could you induce the type of effects reported?

These were pretty small houses, and a quick calculation suggests that they enclosed perhaps 250,000 liters of air. Chloroform begins to take effect at 100 parts per million, thus requiring 25 liters of chloroform gas. Certainly a Flit gun could not do this. Neither chloroform nor ether produce paralysis in the legs as the victims are said to have reported. They can both produce a more dangerous type of paralysis, though, if overdosed: respiratory paralysis, which leads to death, and is not consistent with the Mattoon reports. From a medical perspective, we can dismiss both chloroform and ether.

One author, high school chemistry teacher Scott Maruna, believes the attacks were the work of an actual flesh and blood Mad Gasser, as detailed in his 2003 book *The Mad Gasser of Mattoon:*Dispelling the Hysteria. Maruna pointed to a town loner — antisocial, homosexual, alcoholic, and living in a trailer in his parents' yard — Farley Llewellyn, and nitromethane, perhaps most familiar as Top Fuel drag racing fuel. Though he doesn't supply the proof, Maruna states that all of the victims on the first weekend had been high school classmates of Farley's, and that his family committed him to an asylum on September 11, when the attacks stopped. Most interestingly, Maruna cited personal correspondence with a Mrs. Upton, the Llewellyns' next door neighbor, who recalled that about a week before the attacks, a small explosion rocked Farley's trailer. She said he kept a not-very-secret laboratory in there. A small explosion would certainly be consistent with nitromethane, and its high volatility would also explain why police were able to find no remaining trace of any chemical on the cloth one victim found on her porch, or any remaining odor at any victims' residences.

Chemical addicts with backyard laboratories suggest compounds other than nitromethane to me, and if Maruna's tales of the apocryphal Farley Llewellyn are true, it's not much of a stretch to suggest that he may have been experimenting with methamphetamine. And, coincidentally, that's a drug the Nazis were supplying to many of their soldiers as a stimulant; and so, the feared Nazi connection to Mattoon may have had some substance to it after all. As a liquid, perhaps in the cylinder of a Flit gun, it is said to smell like geraniums. Might an antisocial addict be more inclined to spray a psychoactive drug through the windows of those who had shunned him, than a substance like nitromethane with no special expected effects? Who can guess.

A cursory search of public records in Mattoon did turn up Llewellyns in the 1940s, but none matched any of the first names given by Maruna. I didn't really pursue it, because it doesn't really matter. We have only a third-hand anecdote that even suspected Farley may have been involved, and certainly no evidence. But Maruna's basic explanation is compelling. A real person may indeed have caused the first few attacks with some sprayed substance, which triggered newspaper reports, which triggered paranoia and hysteria whenever anyone smelled natural gas or anything else over the course of those two panicked weeks. Whether or not Farley Llewellyn (or anyone else) did prowl the dark streets of Mattoon with a Flit gun (or something) filled with liquid meth (or anything else) is a question that will remain unsolved, but for the subsequent newspaper-driven frenzy, mass hysteria is indeed a textbook-perfect explanation.

By Brian Dunning
Follow @BrianDunning

Please contact us with any corrections or feedback.

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INTERNET 21 DECEMBER 2016

The movie that doesn't exist and the Redditors who think it does

Over the years, hundreds of people online have shared memories of a cheesy Nineties movie called "Shazaam". There is no evidence that such a film was ever made. What does this tell us about the quirks of collective memory?



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In the early Nineties, roughly around 1994, a now 52-year-old man named Don ordered two copies of a brand new video for the rental store his uncle owned and he helped to run.

"I had to handle the two copies we owned dozens of times over the years," says Don (who wishes to give his first name only). "And I had to watch it multiple times to look for reported damages to the tape, rewind it and check it in, rent it out, and put the boxes out on display for rental."

In these ways, the film Don is speaking of is exactly like the hundreds of others in his uncle's shop. In one crucial way, however, it is not. The movie that Don is referring to doesn't actually exist.

"It feels like a part of my childhood has now been stolen from me. How does a movie simply vanish from our history?"

This isn't Don speaking, but another man – who he has never met – named Carl*. Carl, whose name has been changed because he wishes to remain anonymous, recalls watching a movie called *Shazaam* with his sister in the early Nineties, and has fond memories of discussing it with her over the last 20 years. In their recollections, the movie starred the American stand-up comedian Sinbad – real name David Adkins – as an incompetent genie who granted wishes to two young children.



Wikimedia Commons

"I've taken to Craigslist and have posted a bounty of \$1,000 for anyone that can turn up a copy of this movie, whether it was 'accidentally' kept from Blockbuster or if someone made their own bootleg VHS copy. I want to be able to make it known that the movie is indeed real," says Carl.

Meredith Upton, a 25-year-old videographer from Nashville, Tennessee, also remembers the same film. "Whenever I would see Sinbad anywhere in the media I would recall him playing a genie," she says. "I remember the name of the film as *Shazaam.* I remember two children accidentally summoning a genie... and they try and wish for their dad to fall in love again after their mother's passing, and Sinbad can't [grant the wish]."

Don goes even further. Although he is not certain that the movie was called *Shazaam*, he has detailed scene-by-scene recollections of the film, which include

the children wishing for a new wife for their father, the little girl wishing for her broken doll to be fixed, and the movie finale taking place at a pool party. Don says he remembers the film so vividly because customers would bring the video back to his rental store claiming it didn't work, and he watched it multiple times to try and find the "problem with the tape".

Meredith, Don, and Carl are three of hundreds of Redditors who have used the popular social news site to discuss their memories of *Shazaam*. Together they have scoured the internet to find evidence that the movie existed but each has repeatedly come up empty-handed. Sinbad himself has even taken to Twitter to deny that he ever played such a role.



How did this Reddit community grow? It all began in 2009. An anonymous individual took to the question-and-answer website Yahoo! Answers to pose its users a simple question. "Do you remember that sinbad movie?" they wrote. "Wasnt there a movie in the early 90s where sinbad the entertainer / comedian played a genie? ... help its driving me nuts!"

At the time, nobody remembered the film, and it took another two years for somebody else to ask about it again online. Reddit user MJGSimple wrote on the site: "It's a conspiracy! I swear this movie exists, anyone have a copy or know where I

can find proof!" Replies to the post were sceptical, claiming MJGSimple simply had a false memory.



It wasn't until last year that things took a dramatic turn.

On 11 August 2015, the popular gonzo news site *VICE* published a story about a conspiracy theory surrounding the children's storybook characters the *Berenstain Bears*. The theory went like this: many people remember that the bears' name was spelt "Berenstein" – with an "e" – but pictures and old copies proved it was always spelt with an "a". The fact that so many people had the same false memory was seen as concrete proof of the supernatural.

"Berenstein" truthers believe in something called the "Mandela Effect": a theory that a large group of people with the same false memory used to live in a parallel universe (the name comes from those who fervently believe that Nelson Mandela died while in prison). VICE's article about the theory was shared widely, leading thousands of people to r/MandelaEffect, a subreddit for those with false memories to share their experiences.

It was there, just a few hours after the article was posted, that discussions of *Shazaam* – or the "Sinbad Genie movie" – took off.

"I was dumbfounded to see that there was no evidence of the movie ever being made," says Carl. "I quickly searched the internet, scouring every way I know how

to search, crafting Boolean strings into Google, doing insite: searches, and nothing. Not a damn thing."

On the subreddit, discussions about the film went into great detail. Unlike other false memories on r/MandelaEffect, the issue wasn't a simple misspelling or logochange, but an entire film's disappearance. Many Redditors revealed they had distinct memories of the cover art of the movie. "It said 'Sinbad' in big letters that dwarfed the other print," says Don, who goes by EpicJourneyMan on Reddit, and also remembers how Sinbad posed on the cover – facing left, with his arms crossed and an eyebrow raised. Jessica*, a 27-year-old office worker from Canada, also remembers the cover. "[It had] a purple background, featuring Sinbad dressed as a genie, back to back with a boy who looks about 11 or 12 years old. Sinbad has an annoyed expression on his face," she says.

At this point I should mention something I have neglected to mention so far. In 1996, the basketball player Shaquille O'Neal played a genie who helped a young boy find his estranged father in a commercially unsuccessful film. The cover art of the film features Shaq with his arms folded, laughing, in front of a purple background. His name, "Shaq", dominates the top half of the cover. The movie's name is *Kazaam*.



Imagine if you woke up this morning and Disney's 1998 animation *A Bug's Life* did not exist. After endlessly scouring the internet, you'd come up with nothing, despite your own distinct memories of a bunch of ants going on wild hijinks through the undergrowth. You'd turn to your best friend, your brother, your mum, and say, "Hey, remember *A Bug's Life*? It was about ants", and your friend/brother/mum would turn to you and says: "No, darling. You're thinking about *Antz*."

This is how those who believe in the "Sinbad genie movie" feel when people say they are simply getting confused about Shaq's *Kazaam*. Twin films – remarkably similar movies that are released at the same time – are relatively common, and include *Turner & Hooch* and *K-9* in 1989, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* and *Robin Hood* in 1991, *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line* in 1998, and *Finding Nemo* and *Shark Tale* in 2003–4.



"I remember thinking Shaq's *Kazaam* was a rip-off or a revamp of a failed first run, like how the 1991 film *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* bombed but the late Nineties TV reboot was a sensation," says Meredith, who is one of many who claim to remember both *Shazaam* and *Kazaam*. Don remembers ordering two copies of the former and only one of the latter for the store, while Carl says: "I am one of several people who specifically never saw *Kazaam* because it looked ridiculous to rip off *Shazaam* just a few years after it had been released." When Carl first realised there was no evidence of the Sinbad movie existing, he texted his sister to ask if she remembered the film.

"Her response [was] 'Of course.' I told her, 'Try and look it up, it doesn't exist'. She tried and texted back with only: 'What was it called?' – there was never a question of if it existed, only not remembering the title."

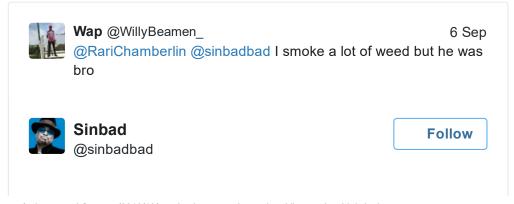
I remember, as a child, that every time my mother bought me a fresh pair of Clarks shoes for the new school year, the shop would offer me a free gift to go with them. It was the late Nineties or early Noughties, and I distinctly remember receiving a lilac pencil case to accompany my new leather numbers. It had different compartments for pencils, rubbers, and sharpeners, and I spent the last week of the holidays drawing a comic book with it by my side on our caravan kitchen table.

There is no evidence that such a promotional offer ever existed. When I ask around, no one remembers it, but when I also ask about another memory I have — of Marks & Spencers' chicken nuggets shaped like Bugs Bunny — no one remembers those either, despite the fact a *Guardian* article proves they were real.

I can't find evidence of the Clarks offer on the internet, though my sister remembers it and a poll that I conducted online shows that at least 500 other people do, too. Does this mean my memory is real? We have become very used to the idea that you can find anything on the internet, yet what do we accept as "proof"? Do we need pictures, videos, and articles, or is the fact that hundreds of others share our memory enough?

Dr Henry Roediger, a professor at the Washington University Memory Lab, doesn't think so. "Lots of people remember detailed, but utterly false, memories. In fact, we all have them," he says. "I have published on what we named 'the social contagion of memory' and what others call 'memory conformity' – that may be at work here." Roediger explains that frequently one person's report of a memory influences another's, and that false memories can spread in this way. "One person's memory infects another," he says.

It is clear that this contagion would only be exacerbated online, where an individual can be influenced by multiple people from all around the world in an instant. The existence of the *Shazaam* Reddit community, therefore, arguably helps a false memory to spread.



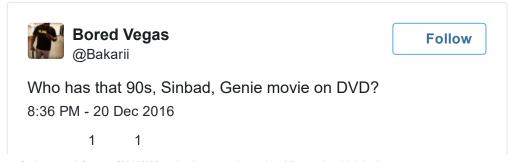
@WillyBeamen_ ain't Nuthin hidden in This internet universe. It should be easy to find if I did a genie movie 10:58 PM - 6 Sep 2016
9 16

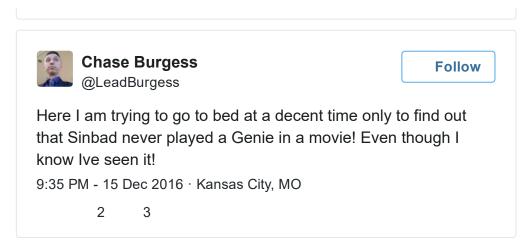
"We often forget whether we actually saw something or whether someone told us about a detail later and we filled in our memories," he goes on. "People infer events and then remember the inferences as if they actually happened. If someone hears 'The karate champion hit the cinder block' they will often later remember that he 'broke the cinder block.' But maybe not: maybe he broke his hand. So the inference is remembered as 'the way it happened.'"

Like accusations that they are misremembering *Kazaam* however, *Shazaam* truthers balk at the idea they simply have false memories that have been influenced by one another.

"I try not to read other's full descriptions of the film because I don't want to subconsciously influence my own recollection," says Meredith, while Jessica says that before she started reading about the film she jotted down her own memories, to avoid being influenced by others'. "After doing so, I read what other people remembered about the poster and a few people remembered the exact same poster that I did."

It is also worth noting that many people seemingly remember the movie independently of the subreddit – with someone different tweeting about it nearly every single day.





So what do these Redditors think has actually happened?

Some truly believe in the Mandela Effect, that there has been some glitch in the world, there are parallel universes, or a timeline has been altered and as such little things have got lost. Some are very active in the r/MandelaEffect community, and have many other false memories, suggesting an element of bandwagon-hopping or a penchant for conspiracy theories.

Others, however, have less fantastical theories. Meredith leans towards the explanation being "some previously undocumented psychological phenomenon", while Don believes the movie was intentionally "disappeared" because it embarrassed Sinbad and Phil Hartman, who he believes was a writer and producer on the film. Jessica also thinks the film was recalled and destroyed.

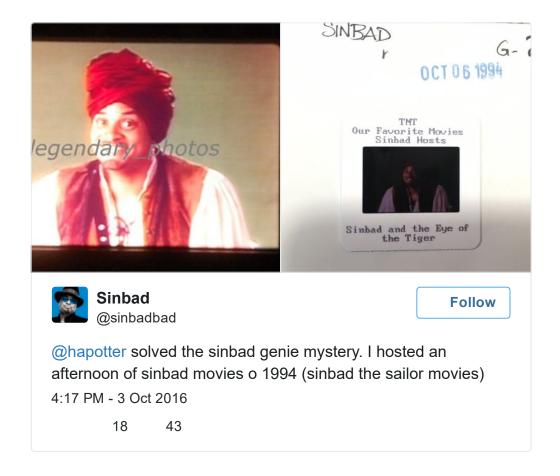
Carl's explanation, however, is the most detailed. Although he considers the movie may have been recalled if DC Comics sued the film's production company (because of their similarly–named TV show *Shazam!*), he believes more in either a timeline shift or a computer simulation.

"University of Oxford's philosopher Nick Bostrom suggested that members of an advanced civilization with enormous computing power might decide to run simulations of their ancestors," he says, also arguing that quantum computers are now able to run such simulations. "In a day where we can now run these

simulations, is this a far-fetched theory?" he argues, noting that the famous scientist Neil deGrasse Tyson put the odds we are living in a computer simulation at 50-50 earlier this year.

"Does it make more sense to argue with the scientific minds of our time exposed to the greatest understanding of the capabilities of modern technology, or to argue with the masses of people who simply write off these effects we are noticing as faulty memories?" Carl asks.

As of today, there is no concrete evidence that *Shazaam* ever existed. A few months ago, Redditors thought they had a breakthrough when they discovered an image of Sinbad in a genie costume on eBay. Sinbad himself, however, tweeted to say that he was dressed that way because he was hosting a Sinbad the Sailor movie marathon.



Some said the image demonstrated where the false memory had originated, others continue to hunt for evidence of a movie they are certain exists.

*Names have been changed.

Amelia Tait is a technology and digital culture writer at the *New Statesman*.



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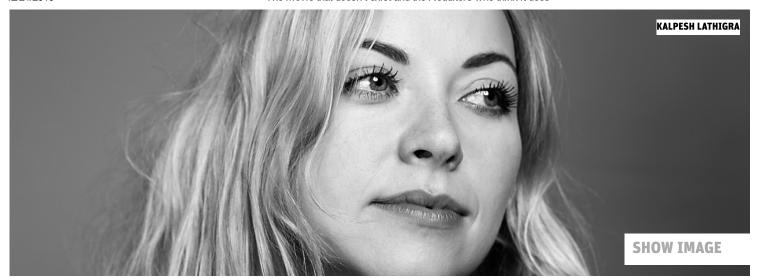
There's a revolution out there - and Labour must be part of it



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Homesick in the modern world



UK 17 DECEMBER 2016

Charlotte Church: "We underestimated how angry white men are"

The singer on Donald Trump, grass-roots rebellion and why Jeremy Corbyn can't win.



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his interview is from the New Statesman's Christmas issue. Take advantage of our special offers and get a subscription for yourself or a loved one this Christmas.

In London's Roundhouse in October, at a concert by the Chicago singer Ezra Furman and his band the Boy-Friends, punters got a strange support act. Charlotte Church in a kaftan, surrounded by a sprawling troupe of musicians, singing a full-throated version of R Kelly's vintage make-out anthem "Bump n' Grind". Then she did "Killing in the Name", the anti-racist rap-metal assault by Rage Against the Machine. Then "Closer" by Nine Inch Nails: "I want to f*** you like an animal".

When these colourful tunes were released in the early 1990s, Church was wearing an Alice band and singing "Pie Jesu" for the Pope. Between kissing the venerable ring, having her phone hacked and appearing on *Blue Peter* and its equivalents around the world, there wasn't much time for R Kelly, which is perhaps why she's doing it now. Despite the ecstatic reaction, the act – which she does at festivals and in late-night cabaret slots – remains defiantly fringe.

"It is dramatic, it is nonsensical, and it is engineered to be as much fun as is humanly possible," she says. "Which in the modern world is becoming far more necessary."

We meet in Dinas Powys, the village just outside Cardiff where Church lives, at a small delicatessen with scaffolding on the front. She has a big navy-blue wraparound coat and a stretchy dress underneath, which she adjusts now and then with a snap. There's a

copy of this paper on the table with an artist's impression of Donald Trump on the cover, and she will jab at it intermittently throughout the interview, in a wordless gesture that says: *This has changed everything*.

As someone whose political opinions have developed in the public eye, Church takes interviews seriously. Her brain fires off in several directions at once but her words are carefully chosen. Occasionally, she thinks she's got herself down a theoretical cul-de-sac ("Brain! Come on!"), stops for a second and backs out again. She has a rare habit of admitting she has changed her mind about things. At the same time, she is fearless. During a trip to New York in 2001, aged 15, she said that the heroism attached to the firemen who were on duty during the 9/11 attacks was distasteful: "They went from here in society to celebrities. They are even invited here to present television awards, which I just don't agree with." At 17 she hosted *Have I Got News for You*, successfully rebuffing digs about her fortune, with some youthful gaffes thrown in – she didn't feel she should have to pay 40 per cent tax to a government she hadn't been able to vote for.

"Have I Got News for You is a piece of piss compared to Question Time!" she cries.

"Question Time is horrendous. I don't think I'll do it again. The last time was right here in Cardiff, two years ago and the audience was completely right-wing."

Before doing the programme, she says, "I squirrel myself away for a week and jampack all the knowledge I possibly can – just interesting things I didn't know before." One of those things was a report in the US scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* which drew links between the civil unrest in Syria and climate change: a five-year drought had pushed rural communities into the cities, compounding the existing refugee crisis and pushing up food prices.

"I thought it was important to bring up because all these things have connections, and we're going to start seeing that more and more," she says. "And I got absolutely annihilated for it afterwards! Then a couple of weeks later, Prince Charles said something about it, then Nasa – and then of course it was OK."

After her Syria comments, the *Sun* ran six pages under the headline "Voice of an Angel, brain like an Angel Delight". It was a continuation of an old narrative that

leaves Church – who turned 30 this year – with one foot in another, grimier era: that of a press which sent bugged wreaths to Freddie Mercury's funeral and tapped the phones of missing schoolgirls. For the tabloids, Church's trajectory from angelic child star to pent-up teenager was too good to ignore.

In 1999, when she was 13 years old, she was invited to sing at Rupert Murdoch's wedding to Wendi Deng on his yacht in New York Harbour. Church and her mother, Maria, were offered a choice: £100,000 for the gig, or favourable press for the next few years. Mother and daughter wanted to take the money: her manager at the time, Jonathan Shalit, went for the second option. The favourable press, she tells me, lasted "precisely two years".

The *News of the World* ran 33 stories on her from hacked voicemails alone. Her pregnancy was announced after a call with a doctor was intercepted. Her relationship with the rugby player Gavin Henson, the father of her two children, was scrutinised. Her mother got wind of a piece in the *News of the World* alleging that her husband had an affair – and she attempted suicide. Church appeared at the Leveson inquiry in 2011, which is where she traces the start of her political engagement. She went on *Question Time* in Swansea afterwards. An elderly woman in the audience suggested that a person stronger than her mother might have been able to handle the limelight.

Church clearly bears the scars from those days, and says that she has always attracted abuse for being outspoken, wealthy and, more recently, for being Welsh. She notes that since the Brexit vote, some of her Twitter trolls have relinquished

their anonymity: the little "eggs" that appear in place of profile pictures have been replaced by photographs and names.

A couple of years after Leveson, Church was asked to do a BBC John Peel Lecture on women in pop, at a time when Miley Cyrus's twerking butt was driving much of the world's news. She identified the figure of Miley as an "untouchable sex-bot", saying that there was no clear career trajectory for the teenage female pop star coming into adulthood, short of removing her clothes. Her own inevitable transition from Opera Charlotte to Sex Charlotte came in the form of her 2005 hit "Crazy Chick": "Won't you lay me on your leather couch/I got a lot I need to talk about". It seems innocent now.

She talks nostalgically of the women singers she listened to as a teenager – Erykah Badu, India Arie, Jill Scott, Sugababes, TLC, All Saints, Alicia Keys. There was an understated toughness to their image, naturally boyish and relatively non-sexualised. If a girl band turned up dressed in combat trousers today there would be countless dissections of their "message" online.

"The rise of identity politics has fed in to all of this nonsense," she says, "and I'm not saying that identity politics is a bad thing; it exists because there are factions within society which are still struggling. But in another way, it is divisive. You might all believe in the baseline thing – feminism, for example – but when so many types of feminism are pitted against each other it becomes segregated, and it can cause disunity even though everybody really wants the same thing.

"Those acts back in the day got through to *all* girls, and all boys, in primary schools – without any analysis of the fact that the girls in TLC were actually quite strong, and not over-vulnerable. Now, a band like that would elicit so much analysis, and loads of people find it impenetrable."

High-level identity politics is hopeless, she thinks, when trying to counter a right-wing message that is clear and brutal.

"They say it's the voice of the liberal elite – but call a spade a spade: a lot of the time, it's just academic writing. What the right wing managed to do, both here and in America, was get beyond all of that, put things into simple messaging. A lot of the time it was bullshit, but apparently now that doesn't matter." She jabs at the picture of Trump again.

"Obviously we underestimated how angry white men are," she says. "All forms of bigotry – whether it's homophobia, misogyny, racism – are about fear of being in the minority. And if you hold the majority position – ie, white males throughout history – you fear losing control. We need to find ways to make people feel like they aren't losing control."

Then, on a roll, she expounds a theory she says may be "mad".

"The alt right in America, they've made themselves victims," she says. "And some of this victim stuff might be to do with the over-sexualisation of women. When you think about porn, and advertising, you've constantly got these dudes feeling urges all over the shop, and a lot of the time, for whatever reason – maybe they're socially awkward – they are not attaining those levels of women, and that's making them embittered and frustrated.

"I don't want to excuse these people, but what's the root cause? We really need to start thinking about things in a far more psychological, human way. If you can't – control consumerism, then have the same the other way round: I'd rather not have page three, but if we're going to, let's have page two – do you know what I mean? An attractive, scantily clad dude."

Church first came to the public eye sitting in an armchair at the age of 11, opposite Jonathan Ross on ITV's *Big Big Talent Show* — and introducing her auntie Caroline Cooper, a wannabe singer with a voice a bit like Beverley Craven's. Church had sung "Pie Jesu" down the phone to Richard and Judy a few weeks earlier. Ross got her to do a few bars. She hit high Cs without batting an eyelid. Her aunt, she says, was furious.

Her parents had been planning to put her through music college before the TV shows and record deal came. She sang love duets with 60-year-old opera singers, performed at George W Bush's inauguration and sat a GCSE at the White House. "By the time I was 16, I said, 'Eugh, I'm dead, I hate this, I want to go home.'"

As a child, remarkably self-possessed, she would say that she was a pretty normal kid, and everything was fine. "And it sort of was . . ." she says. "But I just wanted to be with my friends, to hang out on street corners and drink vodka and go to underage nightclubs. That's what I wanted to do."

She got what she wanted – quit classical music, ended a six-album deal at 20 and started releasing pop stuff, with limited critical success. But you sense there have been many milestones missed because of the accelerated course of her early life. A few years ago she talked about wanting to study quantum mechanics at university, but today she says: "I did want to, but then life gets in the way, doesn't it?"

The funny thing about watching old clips of Church on television is that the audience doesn't break into rapturous applause within six seconds of her opening breath as listeners would today. She was the prototype of the reality–TV pop star but she missed the whole *X Factor* thing by half a dozen years. She tells me that she'd probably have done it, "because I love singing and I think I'm really good at it". She guffaws. But she is not a fan of the show.

"They're completely immoral, the way that they treat people on there. The deals these people go into afterwards are scandalous. They sign their life away for three years, and even if you don't win, you're not allowed to release anything . . . It exploits people, and it's incredibly formulaic, and there's no real artistry. The initial sparks you see in people are completely homogenised out of them by the time they're doing the live shows."

Church has assembled these strong opinions because she was asked to be an *X Factor* judge. "I went for the meeting because I was curious. I asked how much artistic control I could have over my artists, and they basically said none."

Her plan was to infiltrate the *X Factor* system in an ironic way, "make a shed tonne of money and do some good at the same time". She would use her technical knowhow to give direction – "rather than saying some inane shit which doesn't mean anything. I'm a vocalist, I've trained for years; I know what to say to somebody about their tone, if they're sharp or flat. If you don't say stuff like that, it's not helpful, and it's not helpful to the wider public. These people are supposed to be experts. So, I thought I'd go in and bring something to it that was a bit kinder, a bit nicer, but also a bit more informative. But I couldn't. I found that out from just one meeting."

The idea of a grass-roots overthrow of the TV talent shows seems appropriate to the 2016 Church, who says that this year, there are bigger things to be angry about than party politics. She was an outspoken critic of David Cameron ("gross") but when I ask her what she thinks of Theresa May, she says, "Well, she's not saying *anything*, is she? This is an authoritarian government, essentially, that's what it's turning into. Philip Hammond says he's going to abolish the Autumn Statement – he's just not going to *do* it any more? They're using Brexit as an excuse to say they can't show their hand because they're in the middle of negotiations. Meanwhile you've got every EU politician saying, 'There *is* no deal, there *are* no negotiations.' I'm

pretty opposed to May on everything. She is not democratic and she's keeping the country in the dark."

On 21 November at the Cornwall pub in Grangetown, south Cardiff, just near the football ground, Church hosted the inaugural night in a series called Charlotte Church's Pub Politics, tickets priced at £2.75. The series was inspired by Brexit: Cardiff voted 60 per cent Remain, while 52.5 per cent of Wales overall was Leave.

"We need to try and understand the psychology of why people are feeling the way they are," she says. "I want to find ways in which people can express themselves in situations like a pub, where they feel comfortable, and have their opinions challenged, but not in a super-duper academic way, because people then feel diminished by that, and then will go on the defensive.

"Cardiff is a pretty left-wing city, and the crowd at Pub Politics included a lot of left-wingers and some centrists. But there was one guy there, probably in his early sixties, that's his local, and as soon as the conversation turned to anything about minorities, he had a *lot* to say, and loudly.

"And so much of it, as with this dude [*jabs Trump*], is schoolroom stuff. How easily offended he is, and how volatile. How do you deal with a child who is angry?"

She has never met the president-elect: says she hopes she would have declined to do so "because he is such a tool. Mind you, I sang at George Bush's inauguration . .

,))

I ask her why people find it so much easier to believe that immigrants are responsible for their financial hardship, rather than austerity. "Because austerity's far more complicated, and all this has been engineered: It's his fault, he's come over here, he's taken your job, and there's all those mosques going up round here, and where's the churches, even though you don't go to church... It's mania, hysteria. But it's good these things had come to the surface. It's very common to be mildly racist. We need to help people with those fears."

One of the questions raised by the pub politics panel was: do we want our politicians to play dirty?

"Is that Corbyn's problem?" she asks me. "That he's not willing to play dirty like everybody else?" In summer 2015 she threw her support behind him, shared a platform with him at anti-austerity marches and spoke alongside Owen Jones and the CWU union general secretary. She said there was something inherently virtuous about JC, the anti-Farage: "One of the few modern politicians who doesn't seem to have been trained in neurolinguistic programming." Then in the Welsh Assembly election in May she voted for Plaid Cymru rather than Labour's Carwyn Jones. "I still also support Corbyn," she tweeted, with irritation. "Razzzzzz people."

Today, six months later, she tells me: "I think he can't win. The best thing for him to do is to train somebody up under him, who can be a new fresh face but who has the same politics that have always been Labour's. Because there is another option – to neoliberalism, and to being right-wing. That option is the one your fathers and mothers took before you. They didn't vote this way. They were for the trade unions, and workers' rights, and you can see it all unfolding in front of you."

Why can't Jeremy Corbyn win?

"I don't think it's anything to do with him. I think it's everything that the press has created. You hear something more than seven times and then you believe it – that's

how advertising works. He's a relic, he's a nutter, he's a left-wing lunatic.

"I just think that there needs to be somebody there who is *not* Jeremy Corbyn. It's gone too far, and they're not going to stop. They've made up their minds, they have their narrative, and that will always be. Just as they made my narrative: brain of an Angel Delight."

Education is still a big concern for Church. She is home-schooling her children, seven-year-old Dexter and nine-year-old Ruby, with a group of other parents. She tries various unconventional tools for learning, including virtual reality. "I have failed at lots of things in my career and in my life in general, but I've kept going, because as soon as you're stuck on one thing – whether it's your political beliefs, the party that you support – you stagnate," she says.

"I'm not going to go around for Plaid Cymru or for Labour, door to door, telling people how they should vote. I'm going to go and try and speak to people in different ways. I'm trying to understand why people are feeling the way they are. Because it feels good, that's why. It feels really good."

She plans to record an album of her bombastic underground music, too. It will be called *V*, she says, and will feature dozens of collaborators. As we stand up to leave the café with the scaffolding, Church tells me she is also planning to take up martial arts. The other day in Cardiff town centre she saw a man verbally intimidating a beggar. As she approached to see what was going on, he changed his line, saying, "Do you want to come and get a drink, mate?" The beggar left with the man. "If I knew how to defend him, and myself, I would have followed them round the corner, and if the guy had tried anything I'd have been able to help," she says.

"As I'm getting older, I'm starting to realise just how wilful I am. I never used to think I was – but whatever I want to do, I do, which puts me in an incredibly lucky position. I've got a real bob on myself. But I think it's really *important* to, because

the world is harsh. I've always given myself a pat on the back. I just think, if I set my mind to it, I can do anything."

Apart from standing for Labour in Cardiff. "Because I will never do what I'm told," she says. "Besides, I get to work in the creative arts. Which, considering most jobs are going to be automated one day – maybe even in parliament – is where I'm staying."

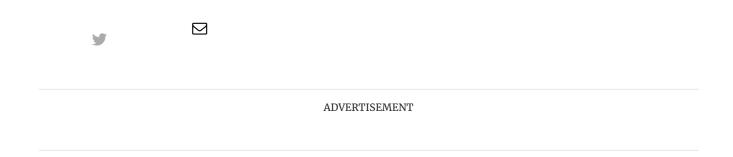
Charlotte Church performs her Late Night Pop Dungeon at the Tramshed in Cardiff on Tuesday 20 December

Kate Mossman is the New Statesman's arts editor and pop critic.



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This article first appeared in the 15 December 2016 issue of the New Statesman, *Christmas and New Year special 2016*



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Two 'deadliest' police departments in US to be investigated in California

Oliver Laughland and Jon Swaine Thursday 22 December 2016

theguardian.com

The two largest law enforcement agencies in Kern County, California, labelled the deadliest police departments in America following a Guardian investigation, will be investigated by state authorities, California attorney general Kamala Harris announced on Thursday.

The Bakersfield police department and the Kern County sheriff's office killed people at a higher rate than departments in any other county in America during 2015 and have been criticised for a culture of violence, corruption and impunity unearthed by the Guardian.

Harris, the US senator-elect for California who will step down as attorney general at the end of the year, said the decision to open the investigations was driven by media reports and community complaints alleging "use of excessive force and other serious misconduct", which her department had been examining for over a year.

A source familiar with the investigations said the Guardian reports were reviewed before the decision to commence with proceedings was made.

The "patterns and practices" investigations will probe for civil rights violations at both department, Harris said in a statement, adding: "Excessive use of force and police misconduct erode and undermine the public's trust in our law enforcement agencies.

"These investigations will objectively, impartially and thoroughly examine whether the Kern County sheriff's office or the Bakersfield police department engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force or other civil rights violations."

In 2015, 14 people were killed by law enforcement in Kern County, a jurisdiction with a population of just under 875,000. In the same time frame, 10 people were killed by the New York police department in the five counties of New York City, which is populated by nearly 10 times as many people and has about 23 times as many law enforcement officers.

The rate of killings has significantly declined in Kern County in 2016. Earlier in December, however, a Bakersfield police officer shot dead an unarmed 73-year-old man suffering from dementia.

That shooting prompted further complaints of violent misconduct. The Bakersfield police department has requested that the FBI review the incident.

In a series of five extended reports, entitled The County, the Guardian examined how Kern County and law enforcement agencies reviewed fatal encounters involving police, revealing that the vast majority of investigators at the district attorney's office were former police officers with the departments they were tasked to investigate.

The series also revealed that the Kern County sheriff's office offered morally dubious cash payments to a number of women who had been sexually assaulted by sheriff's deputies, in exchange for their right to sue. In some cases such payments were as low as \$200.

Bakersfield police chief Lyle Martin said in a statement the department would fully cooperate with the review, and planned to meet state officials in January to discuss the scope and timing of the investigation.

"The trust and confidence of the public is vital to the credibility and effectiveness of the Bakersfield police department," Martin said.

A spokesman for the Kern County sheriff's office said it would "fully cooperate" with the investigation. The county sheriff, Donny Youngblood, was unavailable for comment.

The separate investigations could take up to two years to complete.

"We look forward to working collaboratively with the sheriff's office and the police department," Harris said, "as well as with the community, to address any civil rights violations or other issues that we may find during these investigations."

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A flight in America was delayed and almost diverted on Tuesday after a passenger changed the name of their wi-fi device to 'Samsung Galaxy Note 7'.

Samsung Galaxy Note 7 phones were banned from planes by the US Department of Transportation after several of the devices caught fire.

Airlines have banned use of the Note 7 on flights

Lucas Wojciechowski was on Virgin America flight 358 from San Francisco to Boston and told BBC News he photographed the hotspot after noticing it when he opened his laptop.

A call went out for any passenger with a Note 7 to press their call button.

Mr. Wojciechowski subsequently tweeted the crew's announcements from the late night flight after the pilot warned passengers they would have to make an emergency landing.

"This isn't a joke. We're going to turn on the lights (it's 11pm) and search everyone's bag until we find it.

"This is the captain speaking. Apparently the plane is going to have to get diverted and searched if nobody fesses up soon."

The owner came forward confessing there was no Samsung Galaxy Note 7 on board, but they had changed the name of their SSID wireless device to 'Samsung Galaxy Note 7_1097.'

According to Mr. Wojciechowski, the flight crew later announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, we found the device. Luckily only the name of the device was changed to 'Galaxy Note 7'. It was not a GN7."

Serenity Caldwell, managing editor of Apple products news and reviews site iMore, was on the ground where the plane was landing and had arrived early to board her flight. She posted a series of tweets when she arrived at her gate.

"When I got to the airport (early) today, I found a huge line of people at the counter to my gate. Turns out, the flight had been cancelled.

"It took about two hours for everyone to get their itineraries finally sorted. Finally, they all move on to their new gates and our crew comes.

"They're hanging out while we wait to begin boarding, and one of them lets this slip: "Know why the 9am flight got cancelled?

"The plane was mid-flight when an attendant noticed a wi-fi hotspot. A Galaxy Note 7 wi-fi hotspot. Everyone else makes a horrified face."

Mr. Wojciechowski said he believed no further action was taken on the passenger with the device. BBC News has approached Virgin America for comment.

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Image copyright Twitter - @lucaswoj

Giant golden door to nowhere installed atop Chinese building

upi.com



A giant gold door was installed atop a building in China. Screenshot: Newsflare

CHONGQUING, China, Dec. 22 (UPI) -- A giant golden door erected atop a building in a Chinese city has been drawing attention from locals, who dubbed it the "door of god."

The 26-foot-tall door was installed atop a building in Chongquing, where it stands alone with nothing on either side but the outside air.

The meaning behind the door, an apparent decorative touch, was unclear.

The door has been nicknamed the "door of god" by locals due to its size and position on top of the building.

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BANTER

The quote of the day comes from a Facebook commenter to a story that's making the



Screen Shot 2013-04-12 at 4.01.39 PM

rounds on
the internet
right now. It
concerns an
ultraorthodox
Jewish rabbi
who covered
himself
head-to-toe
in clear
plastic during
a recent

commercial flight and apparently remained that way for the entire trip. Speculation is that the self-Saran Wrapping was done to uphold the orthodox tenet requiring men to keep themselves completely separated from women.



rabbi_plastic

The very simple quote in response to the image of a man sitting on a crowded airplane, covered entirely in transparent plastic?

"Respect his beliefs."

Now I want you to join me in a little thought experiment. I want you to imagine that the guy under the plastic isn't dressed in the familiar vestures of an orthodox Jew but is instead wearing soiled, beat-up jeans and a dirty shirt while sporting a ratty, unkempt beard and long hair. In other words, what if the man on the plane *hadn't* been expressing an extremist religious belief but was just, you know, nuts? Would anyone really be cavalierly demanding

that people, particularly the people stuck next to this guy on the plane, "respect his beliefs" and not regard him as a run-of-the-mill whack-job?

I've made the argument plenty of times but this is such a perfect example of what I often complain about that I just couldn't let it pass without saying something. Basically what I'd like to know is this: Why are we expected to respect beliefs that are clearly outlandish and completely divorced from reality simply because those beliefs happen to be the foundation of one faith or another? The simple answer, of course, is that as a society we've decided that certain kinds of crazy aren't crazy at all, and that there's sanity in numbers. You can get away with just about any kind of behavior that would otherwise be considered unacceptable in civilized society as long as you're doing it in the name of your god and absolutely if your god happens to be one of the three or four most popular gods on the planet, the ones who won a few rounds of the Mr. Universe Pageant a couple of millennia ago.

But again, why is it necessary, even in the opinion of some self-professed nonbelievers, that the general public show respect and deference to the thought processes that would lead a man to wrap himself in plastic, presumably to avoid touching women and therefore offending God? How about this for a change: It's not. It's not necessary at all.

With the exception of those who allow their faith to lead them to do despicable things -- those whose behavior isn't simply eccentric but dangerous -- I do my best to respect people who claim to be religious. I respect the *people* themselves. That doesn't mean I respect their beliefs, because I don't. I don't feel the need to show one ounce of deference to the beliefs of someone who thinks that God listens to his entreaties any more than I would feel the need to show deference to the beliefs of a guy talking to a telephone pole on a street corner who thinks the same thing. Neither of the two has evidence to back up his claims and the only difference between them, really, is that one probably has a roof over his head and *isn't* considered crazy by most of society.

The fact is that when you peel away the culturally sanctioned rationale for not eating meat on a Friday, or sitting on a box and covering the mirrors after someone dies, or making sure that a woman's body is clothed almost completely, what you're left with is just plain old nuts. And what's worse is that the rules and restrictions adhered to by the faithful all too often negatively affect people who should be well beyond the jurisdiction of any one particular religion. It's one thing for someone to make a personal decision not to work on Sunday because he believes his god demands it -- it's another thing entirely for a pharmacist not to dispense the morning after pill for the same reason.

I quite frankly don't give a damn what your god wants; the rights, privileges, and even whims of living, breathing human beings supersede the requirement you've imposed upon yourself not to offend the imaginary friend you talk to before you go to bed every night. The rights of a gay person to get married or of a woman to have an abortion should at no point be considered equal to the "rights" of the faithful to adhere to the regulations imposed by Jesus, Yahweh, Muhammad and so on. Yes, you're allowed to believe what you want, but when that belief collides with reality, reality shouldn't be the one forced to submit. In the game of chicken between what's proven and what can't be, guess which one has to veer off.

No, a religious belief doesn't need to be respected just because it's a religious belief.

Because if you stripped away the religion, guess what a guy wrapped head-to-toe in plastic on an airplane would be?

Just plain, old crazy.

Update: Apparently it's possible the rabbi had wrapped himself in plastic because the plane was going to be flying over a cemetery. That obviously changes everything. My sincerest apologies.

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